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Christian Baptism.

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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM:

ITS

SUBJECTS AND MODE.

BY

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3537

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PREFATORY NOTE.

IN preparing the following Discourses, it has not been my aim to furnish an exhaustive discussion of the subject, but simply to present the substance of the arguments which sustain our practice, in a brief, direct manner, adapted to popular use rather than to the wants of those who wish to master the literature of this great discussion.

I entertain no thought that this volume will supersede the elaborate works on Baptism, which, by reason of their acknowledged superiority, have been accepted as standards; but I have been impressed that these excellent books are not generally read, being seldom found except in the libraries of the preachers, while in many sections our people

scarcely ever hear the subject from our pulpits. There are hundreds of congregations in which the younger members never heard a sermon on Infant Baptism, and probably never more than a very hasty explanation of our practice concerning the mode. The result is that, so far as such communities are educated at all on this subject, it is under other auspices than our own, and by no means friendly to our doctrines. I have thought that something of this character, inexpensive and unpretentious, ought to be offered to those who lack time or disposition to study our more critical works; and with this view I send out these Discourses, believing they will measurably meet a real want, and contribute toward the removal of the more serious difficulties from the minds of earnest seekers after the truth.

S. M. M.

St. Paul, Minn., *March*, 1876.

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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

DISCOURSE I.

SPIRITUAL STATE OF INFANTS.

"For of such is the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. XIX, 14.

THE subject of baptism is usually considered under four heads; namely, the obligation, the subjects, the mode, and the design. The obligation rests on the commission which Christ gave to the apostles to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and the subsequent action of the apostles, which indicates their own interpretation of the command. They administered baptism with water wherever they preached the Gospel and established Churches, showing that this ordinance was to be perpetuated until the end of the world.

I shall therefore assume, in these Discourses, that the duty is imposed on the Church to continue the practice of baptizing with water; and opportunity will be afforded, in considering the subjects and mode, to say all that needs be said in regard to the design of the ordinance—unless, perchance, something should be said concerning the false uses of the rite, growing out of misconceptions of its design.

I now proceed to consider the question, Who are proper subjects of baptism?

It is well to accept the fact, in the outset, that the command to baptize the nations is not very discriminating. It did not restrict the apostles to males or females, to old or young, to Jews or Gentiles; and yet there is no doubt that the consent of the parties to whom the ordinance is given is implied, and therefore there must be some limitation that will exclude coercion on the one hand, and notorious wickedness on the other. In other words, the Church is not authorized to force the rite on the unwilling, nor is she at liberty to extend the privilege to the profane and impenitent. With no other limitation now

perceivable, the command is universal; and, under its wide sweep of privilege, the nations may be placed under the fostering care of the Church, for the purpose of instruction and edification, according to the doctrine and discipline of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Beyond this general commission, we have no authoritative guide in determining the proper subjects of baptism other than the example of the apostles, as recorded in the Book of Acts, with the incidental allusions to the subject in the inspired Epistles. The Church, however, has, with great unanimity, and in all ages, accepted the fact that all true believers are entitled to this ordinance. We have some examples, in the Acts of the Apostles, of persons being baptized after they had become true believers, and had obtained the highest possible evidence of their acceptance before God, in that they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost. The baptism of Saul of Tarsus, afterward Paul, the apostle to Gentiles; and the baptism of the first Gentile converts, under the preaching of Peter, in the house of Cornelius, are instances of this kind. But, since there is no dispute in regard to

this class, there is no need of proofs. There is, however, another class, concerning whose fitness for baptism under the designation of believers there has been some question. I refer to those whom we call penitents, or seekers. They are awakened, and have become concerned for their salvation; they accept the testimony of the Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ, and believe him to be the only Savior of sinners; they have confidence in the reality of the experiences of those in the Church who declare that they have found peace in believing and have obtained in their hearts the Spirit of adoption; but they can not claim to have entered into the rest of faith. Now, the question is, Can such seekers be rightfully admitted to baptism? We answer in the affirmative, and hesitate not to say to such, as Peter did to a similar class on the day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In such case, baptism is a means of pardon, because it is a means of helping the seeker to come to Christ, that he may be justified by faith.

Those penitents, on the day of Pentecost, had not yet obtained pardon; but they had been "cut to the heart," and had been led to inquire, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They had not yet received the gift of the Holy Ghost; but they were convinced of sin, and had become real penitents. In that condition they were instructed to be baptized, and had the promise that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and that promise was made in such connection with the remission of sins as to indicate that the gift followed remission. When Paul in his journey came to Ephesus, he found certain disciples who had not been led into the full faith of the Gospel, with its assurance of heirship in the divine family, and Paul propounded to them the test question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" When they answered that they had not, Paul instructed them more fully; and under his teaching they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, notwithstanding the fact that they had previously been baptized with John's baptism. Then, after their baptism, when Paul had laid his hands upon

them, the Holy Ghost came on them. This, then, is plainly another example of the baptism of seekers, or real penitents.

I come now to speak of another class, concerning whose fitness for baptism there has been much dispute in the Church, and perhaps will be until the dawn of that day when all true watchmen on Zion's walls shall see eye to eye—I mean young children, or infants. In speaking of infants as proper subjects of baptism, I am happy in consideration of the fact that I am simply defending the practice of our own Church, and do not find it necessary to assail the practice of any denomination, or any class of Christian people. There are those who do not see fit to baptize little children, and can not be persuaded that duty calls in that direction. The practice is odious to them, and they want nothing to do with it; the subject, therefore, is not theirs, but ours. In advocating the practice, we are simply taking care of our own; and, if the elaborate discussion of the subject is unpleasant to our neighbors, I have only to say that the necessity for it arises from the virulence and persistence of the

attacks made upon our practice by those who do not believe in it.

As a Church, we affirm the practice of infant baptism, and therefore, at first blush, the burden of proof rests upon us. We are rightfully called upon to state the reasons for our faith, and the ground of our practice. This duty we most cheerfully undertake; and yet it is not improper to remark that a point will be reached in the discussion when the laboring oar will shift hands, and the responsibility will devolve on the opponents of the practice of proving that it is, as they affirm, an innovation, brought into the Church without divine authority, after the apostles were dead. That time will come when we shall have seen, from the terms of the commission to baptize the nations, and from the knowledge they had of baptism in Jewish practice, that the apostles would necessarily understand the command as authorizing the baptism of infants, unless specifically instructed to the contrary; and when we shall see, from the record of their practice, and from the history of the institution, that they did so understand the commission, and practice accordingly.

But, for the present, we turn our attention to the affirmative arguments which we suppose are sufficient to justify the practice.

And yet another preliminary remark will be in place. It is that any duty that is indirectly taught in the Scriptures, so that the knowledge of it is gained by legitimate inference or rational deduction, is just as binding as if presented in positive precept. All Christians acknowledge the principle contained in this statement, and practice duties, the knowledge of which is obtained in this way. For instance, there is no positive precept or injunction directing that women be admitted to the Lord's-supper; and yet there are such facts stated, and such principles inculcated, as to leave no doubt in the reasoning mind that the practice of admitting them is lawful. There is no positive command in the Scriptures for observing the first day of the week, instead of the seventh, as the day of rest and worship; and yet we find ample authority for this in the facts and principles laid down, so that, although the conclusion is reached by inference, it is sound and satisfactory. The immediate design of

the Christian revelation is to instruct us in the way of salvation, and to furnish the world with germs of thought to be nourished with divine grace, and developed into the strength and beauty of the Christian life. It is therefore to be expected that much of the light the Scriptures shed upon the moral condition and Church relations of little children will come to us incidentally, and require the exercise of reason and the observance of just laws of interpretation. I shall therefore not hesitate to assume that rational deductions from the facts and principles found in the Scriptures are to be respected to the full extent of their legitimacy, and to be feared or discredited only by those who find their dogmas better served by *ir*rational deductions.

What, then, is the moral *status*, or the spiritual state, of little children? Are they eligible to any Church privilege or religious ordinance? Has God ever, by word or act, spoken on this subject, so that his voice can be interpreted? And what are the principles involved in infant baptism? Do these principles indicate any thing as to the propriety or impropriety of this practice? These

questions open a wide field, much wider than I shall be able, in my prescribed limits, thoroughly to explore; and yet I hope to make such incursions, and sufficiently careful observations, as to mark out the pathway to right conclusions. And I feel other restraints than those imposed by limits as to time. There are elaborate investigations of a critical character sometimes indulged in connection with this subject, investigations suitable to the stately volume; but my remarks must be less critical, because they must be adapted to the pulpit, and hence to the popular assembly, rather than to the private study of the student. I desire so to present the subject that the ordinary reader of the Scriptures can comprehend the argument, and verify the positions taken.

Let us, then, look at the New Testament teaching in regard to the spiritual state of little children, and ascertain, from their relation to Christ and to the kingdom of heaven, whether they have any rights which the Church dares respect. If they are left without the covenant of grace, and have no interest in the blood of Christ, and no standing in

the family of God; and if their relation to the Church is ignored, and the duty of the Church toward them is undefined, we ought to know the fact, however sad and dismal the thought, and however chilling to the best feeling of our hearts such a discovery must inevitably be. There is no motive for self-deception here, and no comfort in building upon an insufficient foundation. But, brethren, the study of the New Testament on this subject leaves no sting behind. All its utterances, however brief, are singularly comprehensive, and full of comfort. "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

Infants owe their existence to Christ and his redemption. I mean by this more than that he is the Creator of all things and the giver of life, as in his divine nature he is God over all. I disallow the assumption, that, if no redemption had been provided, the posterity of Adam would have lived, suffered, and died in sin, and claim that under a rigorous administration of the law, in the absence of redeeming grace, the penalty of the first transgression would have cut off the first

offenders without offspring; so that, as Mr. Fletcher says, "the only conscious sinners would have been the only conscious sufferers." Why was it that that penalty was not inflicted to the letter of the law, and to the extent of unbending justice? How came it that the execution was stayed, the penalty suspended, the new probation instituted, and that the guilty pair were spared to propagate their species under the new terms of life? It was simply because mercy intervened, and the promised redemption intercepted the stroke of justice, and rescued the living sinners from their dreaded doom, and their posterity from the everlasting reign of seminal death.

Had there been no redemption, the development of creation in the positive existence of the race had not occurred; and then, of course, there had been no infants on earth. The fact that they exist is proof that Christ died for them, and that they are included in the covenant of redemption. He who died for the race died for every child of Adam. We thus start out in the contemplation of infantile life with the assurance that it is the

purchase of the Redeemer's blood, and has some place in the economy of grace.

Infants are subjects of the kingdom of God. Of this significant fact we have the most positive proof. "And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them; but when his disciples saw it they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." This declaration settles forever the fact that infants belong to the kingdom of heaven, and the further fact that their relation to the kingdom entitles them to be known and acknowledged by the disciples of Christ as sustaining so important a relation to him. The objectors to infant baptism have sometimes raised a question here as to whether Christ really intended to say that infants themselves are "of the kingdom," or whether the word "such" in his statement did not mean that only those who humble themselves and become like little children are subjects of the kingdom. The question is scarcely worthy of mention, as it does not reach the dignity of criticism; and yet to pass it by might seem

like overlooking the only show of opposition this part of our argument has encountered. The fact that the Savior assigned membership in the kingdom of God as the reason for admitting their approach to him, and for his personal treatment of them, proves beyond all reasonable doubt that he meant to affirm, in the most literal manner, that they themselves belong to that kingdom. To deny this throws a shade of uncertainty over all his language and conduct, and involves serious absurdities. Why should he tell the people that they must be like little children in order to enter the kingdom, if the little children were not themselves in the kingdom? How could they serve his purpose as models of fitness for a relation which they themselves did not possess? But a few quotations will show the folly of this attempt to cast doubt upon the meaning of the language before us. Matthew ix, 8: "But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given *such* power unto men." Did not this mean the identical power they had seen displayed, and all like it? Mark ii, 2: "And what wisdom is this which is given unto him,

that even *such* mighty works are wrought by his hands?" Does this word "such" exclude the mighty works which the people had just seen? Mark iv, 33: "And with many *such* parables spake he the word unto them." Does not this mean the very parables here recorded, as well as others? Luke xiii, 2: "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered *such* things?" What things? Unquestionably the very thing specified, as well as others of like character. To multiply quotations would be superfluous. The expression means that infants, and all who resemble them in moral dispositions, compose the kingdom of God. The meaning and significance of this membership in the kingdom will appear in another place; and yet it may be well to remark that the phrase "the kingdom of God," and the other phrase found in parallel passages, "the kingdom of heaven," mean the kingdom of God's grace on earth, and also his visible kingdom or Church, indicating in the clearest manner that the subjects of his grace are entitled to recognition as members of his Church, according to their age and ability.

Infants are in a state of gracious acceptance before God. This is implied in what has been said, but deserves a fuller elucidation. They are not only included in the covenant of redemption, without which they could not have been born, but they are, by virtue of their relation to Christ and their interest in his atoning death, so affected by it as to have their existence begun in entire exemption from condemnation on account of their relation to Adam, or the corruption of nature inherited from him. I do not forget, at this point, that the moral condition of infants has been the subject of warm discussion among those who agree to their baptism, as well as with those who deny them this rite; nor do I expect, in my hasty notice of the point, to answer all the queries that arise touching the methods of grace in working salvation for the little ones; but I hope to reach firm footing for all the purposes of the present argument.

It is necessary, in order to a clear understanding of the subject, to consider the fact that all infants sustain a twofold relation—the natural relation to Adam, from whom they are descended; and the spiritual relation to

Christ, by whom they are redeemed. From Adam they inherit the fallen, sinful nature, with all its tendencies to evil; and this corruption of nature is not a mere figure of speech. The tremendous fact of native depravity stares us in the face, not only when we look into the Bible, but when we study the impulses and passions of our own hearts, and when we look out upon the manifestations of human nature in every department of human life. The mystery that puzzles our profoundest thought is the fact that this native tendency to sin remains in the heart during the innocency of childhood, notwithstanding the unquestionable assurance given us that these little ones are the objects of the Savior's solicitude, and subjects of his kingdom, and heirs of his spiritual benediction. We are restrained by the overwhelming testimonies in the case from accepting any statement of gracious influence upon them that destroys or eradicates from their being the germs of inherited evil. Their Adamic nature remains intact. They are born after the flesh, and embryo carnal affections are born within them. In all we say of their gracious state,

we dare not imply aught against the fact that all men are fallen in Adam; but the mitigating thought is that this fall does not bring personal guilt, and that the coetaneous relation to Christ brings a germ of spiritual life, such as can coexist in the heart with the primal bias to evil. That such a state of coincident occupancy is possible is illustrated in the experience of the justified man; for within him there must be the beginnings of spiritual life; and yet the native tendency to evil is not eradicated, but remains and manifests itself in the strivings of the flesh against the spirit. What, then, is the true spiritual state of infants, resultant from the twofold relation which we have been considering? It is, in my judgment, not wise or proper to affirm infant regeneration; for we know of no spiritual process that takes place in the infant soul that answers to the act of regeneration as taught in the Scriptures; and yet they are in the kingdom, and so eminently qualified for the kingdom that they are held up as models; so that, unless adults become "like" them, they can not enter the kingdom. We are therefore led to conclude, that, without

the formal process of regeneration, and without any appreciable exercise of active spiritual agency, they are, "by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement," placed in such a state of gracious acceptance as answers to the gracious state reached by adults only through justifying faith. We can not reckon their spiritual condition lower than this and leave them in the kingdom; nor can we assign to them a more positive spiritual life without supposing a direct action of the Spirit within them that would destroy the carnal affection, which is not destroyed. Here, then, we leave them, and ask whether the Scriptures warrant this representation.

We read in Matthew xviii, 1–3: "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." On every occasion when Christ alluded to "little children," he connected them with the kingdom of heaven; and by repetition

he sought to impress the minds of his disciples favorably with regard to their spiritual standing. But here we notice not merely the relation of the children to the kingdom, but the two significant statements in regard to adults. The first is, that they must "become like little children." This "likeness" may imply a resemblance in disposition, in docility, or teachableness; but it is most natural to interpret it of that in the children that fits them for the kingdom; and this takes us beyond their natural dispositions, their humility and teachableness, to their gracious state, as affected by their spiritual relation to Christ. The second statement in regard to adults confirms this view; for it is that, in order to become "like little children," they must be "converted." Now, that "likeness" which results from conversion is a spiritual likeness, and conversion does introduce the converted person into a spiritual state which is easily distinguished from the process of conversion; and that spiritual state is one of gracious acceptance with God, and corresponds essentially with the gracious state of infants. Here is a real "likeness," and one

based on something immediately connected with membership in the kingdom of heaven. We therefore do no violence to the passage by paraphrasing it on this wise: "Except ye who have committed actual sins, and have fallen under condemnation, shall now repent and be converted, and thereby be delivered from the reigning power of sin, and be restored to a state of gracious acceptance, such as was yours in childhood, before the commission of sin, and such as belongs to all little children, ye can not enter into the kingdom of heaven." If this is the sense of the Savior's words, and there is certainly no good ground for doubting it, all I have said of the gracious state of "little children" is fully justified. They are not only in the kingdom, but they are in the moral condition into which adults enter by conversion. Without the process of regeneration—a term which applies only to adults—infants are in a state of salvation, that corresponds, as nearly as we can trace resemblances in such a case, with the state of salvation enjoyed by the justified believer in Christ. Then, if they are capable of any religious rite at all, as we

shall see they are, they are just as fit for baptism as they are for the kingdom of heaven.

Infants are classed with believers, and are to be treated as believers. There are but two kingdoms in the universe that we know any thing about. The one is the kingdom of God, and the other is the kingdom of the devil. We have seen to which of these kingdoms the little ones belong. Happy for us that on this point we are not left to conjecture. There are also two classes into which the whole human family may be divided, in the light of the Scriptures; namely, believers and unbelievers. In making this division, we might not be able to make the assignments correctly, in every case; but He who sees the heart, and discerns the "spirit of faith" where we could not see it, can draw the dividing line with unerring exactness. But there are some very marked characters whom we can classify according to the infallible judgment of the Word of God. The question I wish here to propound is, On which side of the line that separates between believers and unbelievers shall we place the

children? Shall we classify them with believers or unbelievers? Before deciding this question, it should be remarked, further, that these two classes, if the Gospel commission were fully carried out, might be distinguished as the baptized and unbaptized, as the saved and unsaved. The subjects of salvation, in the contemplation of the Scriptures, consist of baptized believers; and the unsaved are the unbaptized unbelievers. Of course, this commission is not perfectly carried out—so that some of the saved are not formally baptized, and some of the baptized are not saved. The lines of the visible Church do not quadrate perfectly with those of the kingdom of God. But I am now speaking of the perfect classification, as it would be under the perfect application of the Gospel commission to the entire race. Where, then, should we place the children? I doubt not that every heart responds, quite regardless of creeds, The little ones belong to the company of believers! yes, of baptized believers! We dare not class them with the unbaptized unbelievers. They are not unbelievers. They can not disbelieve, and, until they become unbeliev-

ers, they have all the spiritual relation to Christ and his kingdom that faith implies, and which to the adult is secured only by faith. We therefore, when met by the objector with the announcement that they can not believe, and therefore must not be treated as believers, retort, with all emphasis, "*Nay, sir; they can not disbelieve.*"

And that they are properly classed with believers, and accounted believers, and treated as believers in the Church of God, is evident from the incident, a part of which has been cited. I read the whole paragraph, Matthew xviii, 1–6: "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe

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in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

The only way to modify the meaning I have given this passage is to show that the "little child" which was set in the midst of the disciples was not a little child, in the sense of being an infant, or under the years of responsible moral action. Indeed, the effort has been made to this end, some supposing this necessary because of the description in the latter part of the passage, "One of these little ones which believe in me." But there is no doubt that the "little child," and the "little ones which believe," are of the same class, and that the little child in the midst of the disciples represented the whole class. In other words, there is no difference as to rank between the one in the presence of the disciples and the ones that are said to believe. Then, was the little child called and set in their midst a young child or infant? or was it a youth, capable of believing and being converted? If the latter, the whole force of the lesson given to the disciples is lost, and the illustration is one the pertinency of which

it is difficult to understand. Indeed, the entire incident becomes misleading, unless the little child was an infant, for the reason that in another place we have the same illustration in regard to entering into the kingdom, when the little children present, and pointed to as models of fitness, are distinctly called infants. I refer to Luke xviii, 15–17: "And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them; but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." Here the little children are infants, brought by their parents; and yet he called them to him, as in the case of the little child in the other instance. And then, after pronouncing them subjects of the kingdom of God, he tells those present that they can only receive the kingdom, or enter into it, by becoming like these little children. The illustration is the same, and the lesson is the same, in both instances; and therefore the

little children are of the same class, while in one instance there can be no doubt that they were infants. And the word rendered "little child," in the passage in question, where the little ones that believe in Christ are mentioned, is the same that is used with reference to the infant Jesus, in every instance, until after his return from Egypt. It occurs where the Savior speaks of "babes;" and here, in the passage just cited, it is used of the same that are called infants. They are infants—*brephos*—in the beginning of the passage, where they are brought to Jesus; and immediately, when they are held up as models of fitness for the kingdom, they are "little children"—the same class as the "little ones that believe." Now, from all this, it is apparent that the assumption that the little child, which Jesus set in the midst of the disciples, was a youth old enough to be converted, is at variance with all the facts, and utterly inadmissible. And the interpretation which claims that the Savior had ceased to speak of the little child before them, and of little ones of that class, and had begun to speak of those who had become like them by

conversion, and had only the converted adults in mind, when he mentioned "these little ones which believe in me," is purely fanciful, without authority, and unnecessary to meet any difficulty in the way of the most natural import of the words. Such a transition of thought seems to me to be out of the question. In one sentence it is "this little child;" in the next, it is "one such little child;" and in the next, it is "one of these little ones which believe in me." The only real necessity in the case is to find a good, proper sense, in which these "little ones" can be said to "believe." I submit that we have done this. They could not believe as do adults; but they were in possession of the spiritual blessings, and of the relation to Christ, which adults only receive by believing; and in view of their spiritual union with himself, and of their being in the state of salvation which believers have by faith, the Savior, by an easy figure of speech, called them believers, in order to class them with believers, and to indicate their fitness to be treated as believers. This is, therefore, their proper *status* in the Church; and in claiming

for them the relation, the moral standing, and the treatment of believers, we are not going beyond the record. Nothing but the guilt of unbelief can cut them off from this relation; and the solemn warning against "offending" them, or ensnaring them so as to cause them to offend, is a most significant intimation of the importance attaching to their proper treatment.

But if they are to be treated as believers, and if they are to be "received in the name of Christ," I ask, How is this to be done, if not by putting upon them the badge of discipleship, the token of recognition as believers, which is the only rite adapted to their condition in life—Christian baptism?

I find in them all that baptism means, all its spiritual import implies; and I find no principle involved in baptism that renders it inapplicable to them. They are in the kingdom, in Christ, in his body, the Church; they are in a gracious state of acceptance, and are therefore fit for the ordinance. And the ordinance consists of dedication to God, a covenant relation to God, and the sign of the inward grace. Infants, under the Old

Testament, were accounted capable of this, and entitled to it; for they were placed in the covenant, were dedicated to God, and received the outward rite which was the token of God's covenant; and all this by direct command of God. We are then brought face to face with parental obligation, as well as with the duty of the Church, with reference to the little children. If parents were required under the Old Testament to dedicate their offspring to God, and if the change of dispensation enlarged the privileges of the pious, but did not lower the standard of moral obligation, or excuse from any social duty, there is nothing more reasonable than to expect in the Church under the Gospel some provision for the formal consecration of the children, and their enrollment in covenant bonds with all that make up the kingdom of God. But if that provision is not found in connection with the unrestricted commission to disciple the nations, baptizing them, it does not exist, and one of the most precious privileges and solemn duties belonging to parents under the Old Testament is strangely eliminated from the New Testament. I can not believe this

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has been done. It is contrary to the genius of the Gospel, and opposed to all right interpretations of the actions of Christ toward childhood, and deprives his comprehensive utterances in regard to the little children, and their relation to the kingdom of heaven, of their plainest meaning. And if this strange excision of the children has taken place, it has been done without notice or intimation, and without the assignment of any reason, as well as in the face of these significant sayings, which rather imply the extension of their privileges than their deprivation of those that belonged to them under the former dispensation.

Discourse II.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children." — Acts II, 39.

IN this language we find such an allusion to the Abrahamic covenant, and to the children of those in the covenant, as implies necessarily, under the circumstances, the proper covenant standing of the little ones, and recognizes their right to baptism. The word children sometimes relates to posterity in general, without regard to the special condition of infancy; but here there is such a present application of the language to the state of things in existence that the most natural and easy interpretation is that which includes the little ones of the household, with the parents, as heirs of the promise.

The language was addressed to Jews, who were accustomed to look upon their infant

children as belonging to the covenant, and were familiar with infant Church membership and infant baptism—the latter as practiced in the case of proselytes. It refers to the promise contained in the covenant with Abraham, in which covenant God engages to be the God of Abraham and his seed, meaning not only his descendants in general, but his infant offspring in particular, and in which he recog nizes infant Church membership, fixing upon them the token of the covenant. The words "your children" correspond to "thy seed" in the original promise; and "thy seed" is shown to include infants by the command to circumcise the child of eight days. The connection between "thy seed" in the original promise, and the command to circumcise every man-child, shows that God intended to recognize the infant offspring of Abraham as in covenant with himself; and the relation between baptism and "your children" in this passage is so similar to that between "thy seed" and the command enjoining circumcision in the institution of the covenant that we can not avoid the conclusion that God intended both "you and your children" to

receive the same token of recognition. The language of Peter must be explained in harmony with the well-known signification of similar language in the covenant to which he referred. Then, as infant offspring were unquestionably embraced in "the promise" as first made to Abraham, they must also be included in this application of "the promise" made by Peter. The expression "thy seed" related to infants when the promise was made; and the words of Peter, "your children," can not, by any fairness of interpretation, be made to mean any thing different. Neither one of these expressions excludes from the promise either grown posterity or infant children.

Some have claimed that the "promise" alluded to was only the prophecy of Joel, which was so remarkably fulfilled in the gift of the Holy Spirit; but that prophecy is in another place distinctly cited, while it is the invariable custom of the apostles to speak of the covenant with Abraham as "the promise," by way of distinction. In the following chapter there is recorded a similar discourse, delivered by this same Peter on an occasion of similar import, in which he distinctly specifies

the covenant of Abraham as containing "the promise" which he quotes: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." This is the covenant which contains the promise "to you and to your children;" and I propose a careful analysis of its provisions and scope, intending to develop from its spirituality and permanency an argument for infant baptism which can not be rejected without the most flagrant violation of the soundest principles of Scriptural exegesis.

God's method of saving sinners is the same in all ages. He never adopted but the one plan of redemption, and he will never exchange that for another. Through all the changes of the outward structure of the Church, and the modifications of external ceremonials that have marked the passing of the dispensations, that one plan has been kept in view, while its progressive development moved steadily onward to its culmination in the coming and official work of the Messiah, "the seed of the woman" and

the "seed of Abraham." This plan was darkly shadowed to Adam, to Enoch, and to Noah, and more clearly intimated to Abraham. With this patriarch, God established in visible form his covenant, which was to be the charter of the Church to the end of time, and in which he honored his servant by constituting him the father of many nations, and making him the repository of promises to be fulfilled only through the Messiah and under his spiritual dominion. This covenant was therefore distinguished as the "covenant of promise." It contained a variety of stipulations, which were not all revealed at once, but were declared to Abraham from time to time, perhaps as his faith was able to receive and appreciate the unfolding of the divine purpose. These revelations, which entered into the covenant with Abraham, extended through a series of years, so that we must collate a number of passages in order to gain a comprehensive view of its far-reaching provisions. I therefore present the following:

"Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kin-

dred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis xii, 1–3.) "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him: Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." (Genesis xiii, 14–16.) I would also refer to the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, without reading it here. It contains a reiteration of the promise of a numerous seed, an account of Abram's justification, together with a specific declaration respecting the Egyptian bondage and deliverance. We next come to the fuller revelation and more formal establishment of this covenant, in the seventeenth

chapter of Genesis: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations

This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." (Genesis xvii, 1–14.)

Then, after the trial of Abraham's faith, as recorded in the twenty-second chapter, we find this same covenant renewed, in the following words: "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son,

thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Genesis xxii, 15–18.) This same covenant was renewed with Isaac, Genesis xxvi, 3–4; and also with Jacob, Genesis xxviii, 10–15.

There are three points to which we must direct our attention, in order to understand the provisions of this covenant, and to see its bearing on the subject before us, namely: 1. Its oneness, as distinguished from all other covenants. 2. Its twofold character, or its literal and spiritual import, as related to the literal and spiritual seed of Abraham. 3. The perpetuity and development of its spiritual part under the Gospel dispensation.

The *first* point is, God made *but one covenant* with Abraham. That one covenant contained several promises, as any covenant may contain numerous stipulations, but each promise was not a distinct covenant. If the several distinct promises are to be taken as

so many covenants, then were there several distinct covenants made with Abraham which have no sign or token, and which were never ratified in covenant form. The Scriptures speak familiarly of the covenant with Abraham, as distinct from all other covenants; but they never speak in the plural, as if there were more than one; nor do they specify one so as to imply that there were others. True, the sacred writers have spoken, in a few instances, of "the covenants," and of "the two covenants;" but this language has reference to the covenant made with Moses, in connection with that with Abraham. They never speak of two covenants with Abraham.

That the covenant with Abraham and that made with Moses are not the same, is evident from several considerations:

1. They were instituted at different times. This fact would not of itself prove the point in hand, since the same covenant was established at one time with Abraham, was renewed and confirmed to him at different times, and was subsequently renewed and established with Isaac and Jacob; yet we find the difference in the dates of the two cov-

enants mentioned by the apostle Paul, as something of importance, when he was showing the difference between the covenant with Abraham and the ceremonial law; so that the difference in dates, in connection with other facts, proves a real difference in the identity of the covenants. One was given four hundred and thirty years before the other; hence they are not identical. If the covenant with Moses were the same that had been previously made with Abraham, the date of its establishment with Moses would not have been the date of its origin; but the Scriptures speak of the Mosaic covenant, not as the renewal of another covenant dating back to the days of Abraham, but as having its origin in the day when God took the children of Israel by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. (See Jeremiah xxxi, 32, and Hebrews viii, 9.)

2. These covenants are distinguished by different names. That with Moses is called "the law," while that with Abraham is denominated "the promise." This is particularly the case in the Epistle to the Galatians, where the difference in the nature of the two

covenants is discussed, and the apostle uses this distinction in justification of his course in offering the "blessing of Abraham" to the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ. In explaining "the promise," so as to apply to Gentiles, who by accepting the Gospel are constituted "the seed of Abraham," he anticipated the objection the Jew might make, to the effect that this extension of privilege under the Abrahamic covenant would array the law in antagonism with the promise, since the law, or the covenant with Moses, belonged only to the Jews; and in recognition of this objection, and for the purpose of answering it, he asked, "Is the law against the promise?" He showed that it was not, and that it could not restrict the promise from reaching out beyond the limits of the law, even unto all the seed.

3. The Mosaic covenant was peculiar to the Jewish nation, while the Abrahamic covenant was designed for "all nations"—for "all the kindreds of the earth." The precepts, promises, and particularly the ritualistic services of the Mosaic covenant, look to the distinct nationality of the Israelites; but the

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wording of the Abrahamic covenant shows its adaptation to all the families of the earth. It was clearly intended to include the Gentiles in its provisions, and to bring all nations upon an equality as respects their rights to the blessings of the Messiah and the privileges of the Church. Hence, in speaking of its full development in the form of the Gospel institution, the apostle says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles."

4. That the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants are not identical, is seen in the fact that one was "*added*" to the other, for a limited time and a definite purpose. The apostle, having shown that the law, which is the covenant with Moses, could not give life—could not pardon, justify, or save the sinner—anticipated the objection that would naturally arise, and himself asked the question, "Wherefore, then, serveth the law?" If it could not justify, of what use was it? Why was it given? He answers, "It was *added* because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made,

and was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." (Galatians iii, 19.) The "promise" was made to Abraham, in the "everlasting covenant," that in his "seed" all the nations should be blessed. That "seed" was Christ; and the covenant could not be fulfilled, and must not be repealed, until Christ came, and all the nations received the blessing of Abraham through him. Hence, its fulfillment and development belong to the Gospel period. But before Christ came the Israelites were strongly inclined to wickedness, especially to idolatry and unbelief; and in order to restrain their evil passions, and to prepare them for the advent of the Messiah, the promised seed, "the law," with its prohibitions and curse, and with its burdensome rites, was "added" to the Abrahamic covenant with its "promise," as the most effectual means of promoting piety and the fear of the Lord among a people so refractory.

5. The Mosaic covenant was blended with one part of the Abrahamic covenant; that is to say, that the literal part of the covenant with Abraham was taken up into the Mosaic, so that all that related to the literal seed of

Abraham, and the temporal promises, and the inheritance in the literal Canaan, was embraced in the covenant with Moses, and fulfilled in the establishment of Israel in the land of promise. Thus there was in fact a real union of these covenants, without antagonism, in the dispensation of the law; showing that the law did not disannul the promise, nor displace, nor repeal, any part of the covenant with Abraham.

6. The Mosaic covenant was abolished, and the Abrahamic covenant established, by the coming of the Messiah. This is clear, from many Scriptures. The law was added for a limited time, and must needs expire, by limitation, with the appearance of Christ, the promised seed. "The law was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made." The Abrahamic covenant existed for four hundred and thirty years without the law, and the addition of the law made no change in the covenant, and had no effect upon it except to fulfill its temporal aspects, so that when the work for which the law was added was done, and the time for its expiration arrived, it

gave way for the maturity of the promise, and the development of the covenant in its spiritual part, without affecting the integrity of the covenant in the least. It can not, therefore, be that the covenants with Moses and Abraham were the same, or that the expiration of the law, by limitation, could repeal, invalidate, or disannul the promise, which looked forward to Christ, "the promised seed," and the dispensation of spiritual blessings through him to "all nations." The fact that the Mosaic covenant expired, by limitation, at the death of Christ, requires no proof; but how the death of Christ could operate to repeal or supersede the Abrahamic covenant, with reference to its spiritual aspects, is something which the opposers of infant baptism have never been able to show, although they have spent much labor in the attempt. Paul taught plainly that Christ did not repeal or supersede this covenant, but that he confirmed it. "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promise made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy," etc. (Romans

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xv, 8, 9.) The "promise made unto the fathers," in which the Gentiles were interested, and which Jesus Christ, as the minister of circumcision, confirmed, was the promise of blessing in the seed of Abraham for all nations. This part of the covenant existed only in promise, although it was a covenant promise, ratified by the sign of circumcision, until Christ came, when the fleshly part of the covenant, being fulfilled, passed away, and the spiritual part came forward in full development, in the form of the Gospel Church, including all the spiritual seed of Abraham, and bestowing upon them the appointed token, which is not circumcision, but baptism. This spiritual covenant is now confirmed of God in Christ, and as the institution of the law could not disannul the promise, so neither could the expiration of the law invalidate any of the covenanted rights of the spiritual seed. The Abrahamic covenant, therefore, stands forth "the everlasting covenant," the covenant of grace, the charter of the Church of Jesus Christ, down to the end of time. The old anti-Pedobaptist notion was, that the covenant of Abraham was

so blended with that of Moses as to be one with it, and therefore that it was confined to the literal descendants of Abraham, and limited to temporal promises, and passed away with the dispensation of Moses; and that, consequently, all rights and privileges secured to adults or infants, under that covenant, passed away with the law of ceremonies and the ushering in of the kingdom of Christ. The incorrectness of this view is now apparent. It is utterly insufficient to account for the terms of the covenant, or the language of the New Testament writers respecting it. It involves absurdities and contradictions that brand it as error, while the proofs abound that this covenant was spiritual as well as temporal; that it was distinct from the covenant of Moses, and grandly survives the abrogation of the old dispensation, bearing to all nations the covenanted mercies of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It has always been felt, if the Abrahamic covenant is spiritual, and remains in force under the Gospel as the charter of the Church of Jesus Christ, that, inasmuch as infants were included in that covenant, and received the token of recog-

nition as the heirs of promise, by the express command of God, they still have the right to the same recognition by the appointed token, under the dispensation of the kingdom of God. And this is a proposition which no learning can invalidate, and nothing better than quibbling can avoid. If the Abrahamic covenant is in force to-day, as it surely is, unless it can be shown to have been repealed, there is no power on earth to disprove the right of our infant offspring to recognition in the Church by Christian baptism.

We must now look more directly at the twofold character of this covenant, and particularly at its spiritual aspects. The position has been assumed that God made no covenant with Abraham in the proper sense, but only promised him two covenants, one of which was fully developed, signed, sealed, and delivered at Mt. Sinai, and the other at Mt. Zion. This, however, does not quite accord with the truth. The covenant was made, signed, sealed, and delivered, so to speak, in Abraham's day, when he received the sign of circumcision as the token of the covenant between God and himself. That

one covenant, so formally delivered and established, contained two classes of promises, and these promises were afterward confirmed and developed into distinct covenants—not to supersede the Abrahamic, but in pursuance of it, as the means of carrying out its stipulations with reference to the literal and spiritual seed and the temporal and spiritual blessings. All the forms the Church of God afterward assumed, under Moses and under Christ, were in the direct line of the fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham. The covenant at Sinai was "added;" but its development fulfilled the temporal part of the covenant, which had been given four hundred and thirty years before.

The apostle Paul illustrated this twofold idea of the covenant by the history of Abraham's family, in the "allegory," found in Galatians iv, 22–26: "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from

the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." The word "covenants" here means testaments, as in the margin. In this allegory the bondwoman and her son are the types of the Mosaic covenant, which took up into its constitution the temporal promises to Abraham; for it is a covenant that proceeds from Sinai, which answereth to Jerusalem, which afterward became the metropolis of the nation organized under the covenant of Sinai. In other words, the bondwoman represents the Church under the law, while her son, born after the flesh, represents the literal descendants of Abraham, who constituted the membership of the Church during the period of its bondage to the law of ceremonies. In like manner, the free woman and her son are types of the spiritual part of the covenant, or of the Church under the Gospel, which proceeded from Jerusalem, as the law did from Sinai. Jerusalem which is above is

the spiritual Zion, the Church of God under the Gospel, of which the free woman, Sarah, was the type, whose membership are "children of promise," not literal descendants of Abraham, but his spiritual seed, typified by Isaac, the child of promise, born to Abraham by special dispensation of God. The apostle applies this illustration of the covenants of Moses and Abraham by saying, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise." And again, "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

A careful consideration of the blessings promised in the covenant with Abraham, will show the correctness of the view taken of the oneness of that covenant, with its two branches, the temporal and the spiritual.

1. The first item in the covenant is, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing," etc. This implied worldly prosperity and usefulness, together with personal acceptance with God and a high state of spiritual enjoyment. In both respects, it was fulfilled in the experience of the patriarch.

2. The covenant secured to Abraham a numerous progeny, of whom Messiah should be born; and also a spiritual seed as numerous as the stars of heaven. He was made the "father of many nations." This was literally true, but its proper application is to the spiritual relationship. Thus Paul understood it, as the following shows: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith,

that it might be by grace; to the end the the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed," etc. (Romans iv, 11–17.) "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians iii, 6–29.) These passages fix the sense of the promise that Abraham should be the father of many nations, and show that it looked forward to Gospel times, and contemplated a spiritual seed.

3. The covenant secured to his descendants the land of Canaan for an inheritance and possession. This promise was fulfilled after the bondage in Egypt and the sojourn in the wilderness; but even this promise of the literal Canaan, though belonging to the

temporal part of the covenant had within it a high spiritual import. The inheritance in Canaan was a type and pledge of the inheritance in heaven. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews so interpreted it. When he would impress the reader with the danger of apostasy, he pointed to the example of their fathers, who failed through unbelief of entering into the rest of Canaan, and thereby urged fidelity, lest they should fail of the heavenly rest. Of the ancient worthies, including Abraham, we have this record: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And, truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." (Hebrews xi, 13–16.) And if any

doubt that Abraham understood the promise in the covenant to include the heavenly country, I refer them to the words of this chapter a few verses above the ones read: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews xi, 9, 10.) Abraham himself, it will be seen, regarded the "land of promise" as a type of the "better country," in which God had prepared for him a city with foundations.

4. This covenant contained the promise of the redemption of the world through our Lord Jesus Christ. "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That "seed" was Christ. Through him the blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles. To the fulfillment of this promise, which was the crowning glory of all God's revelations, the entire covenant constantly looked. This was its grand design, and its every part was arranged with reference to this result. The "blessing" promised to the nations through

Christ was primarily the gift of the Holy Ghost. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The apostles every-where appealed to the covenant with Abraham as authority for offering spiritual blessings to the people. Surely, then, that covenant was the Gospel covenant. Strange that any should deny it! Paul says: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." To "receive the promise of the Spirit" is to receive the Spirit promised in the Abrahamic covenant. This is the "blessing of Abraham"—the blessing promised him, and, through his seed, to all nations—the very blessing that comes on the Gentiles through faith in Jesus Christ. "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith,

preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." When the nations receive the Gospel and its blessings, they are blessed with faithful Abraham. They receive the Holy Spirit promised, which is the fullness of blessing. Thus all nations are blessed through the preaching of the Gospel, because the Gospel brings to every soul this promise of the Spirit through faith. The reception of the Gospel, with its gift of the Spirit, constitutes believing Gentiles the children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise. It is therefore as clear as the light that the covenant with Abraham is the Gospel covenant.

We now see that the repeal or abrogation of the Mosaic covenant, or its passing away by expiration of the time for which it was made, did not touch the integrity and binding force of the Abrahamic covenant. This is an important point; for opposers of infant baptism make their strongest argument on the passing away of the "old covenant" and the establishment of "the new covenant." They quote with great confidence the prophecy

of Jeremiah, and the quotation and application of that prophecy in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as if the abrogation of the "old covenant" repealed all the rights conferred on the little children in the Abrahamic covenant. The radical error of anti-pedobaptists on this point is in confounding the "old covenant," which "waxed old," with the Abrahamic covenant, which never did "wax old." The covenant which "waxed old" was that with Moses, not that with Abraham. Jeremiah says: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: *not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt;* which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jeremiah xxxi, 31–33.) The covenant with Abraham was not the

one that was made in the day that God took the Israelites by the hand to lead them out of Egypt; nor was its promise of a spiritual seed and spiritual blessings made any part of the covenant that "waxed old" and vanished away. On the contrary, every marked feature of the "new covenant" corresponds with that which was spiritual in the Abrahamic covenant, which, as we have seen so plainly, was the Gospel covenant. That which is spiritual never "waxes old," although it antedates the fleshly covenant four hundred and thirty years. It is as new to-day as it was the night when Abraham first lifted his eyes to the stars of heaven to be impressed with the countless multitude of his spiritual seed.

We have now seen that the covenant with Abraham, which embraced the little children, and required their dedication to God and the bestowment upon them of the token of the covenant, was one in fact, while it branched out into two parts, the literal and the spiritual; that it contemplated a literal and a spiritual seed; that it contained promises of temporal and spiritual blessings; that it was adapted to the condition and wants of Jews

and Gentiles; that neither the institution nor the dissolution of the ceremonial law, under the covenant with Moses, affected its integrity as a covenant; and that, in its full development, under the promised seed, it belongs to the Gospel dispensation, and is, therefore, the charter of the Church of Jesus Christ through all the ages. Who, then, with these points before him, that entertains high regard for the Word of God, and respects rigid adherence to right rules of interpretation, can doubt that the covenant Christians are under to-day is the one that God made with Abraham, when he made him the father of all that believe? That was emphatically the covenant of redemption, "the everlasting covenant," the only covenant containing the promise of salvation through the Messiah. In its literal aspects, it related to the Jews, and has been fulfilled. Its literal part was the foundation of the Mosaic economy. This part of it was temporary, and blended with the covenant of Sinai, and passed away with the dispensation that constituted its full development. But the spiritual part, which was the basis, the life, the soul, of the covenant,

the Gospel in embryo, remains unimpaired. As the temporal part was taken up into the Mosaic economy, and fulfilled, so this is unfolded and fulfilled in the Gospel economy.

Here we have firm footing; but the stubbornness of the opposition renders it important to guard the subject. When we affirm that the Abrahamic covenant is the Gospel covenant, we do not mean that the Gospel, in all its fullness of light and privilege, belonged to Abraham and his descendants. Not by any means. Nor do we mean that any of the civil rights and privileges that pertained to the literal aspect of the covenant pass over to the Church of the spiritual seed. This has all been settled. But we do mean that the spiritual part of that same covenant had direct reference to the Gospel day, and that all the promises of spiritual blessings belong to all the spiritual seed of Abraham. That spiritual seed consists of all God's covenanted people—of all that are Christ's—who constitute the Church, or body of Christ. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Then are infants included, or excluded?

If they are included, their right to the token of the covenant is as clear as the midday sun in a cloudless sky. But if they are excluded, I ask on what ground? By what authority? The covenant is the same that God put them in at the first organization of his covenanted people; they have not been cut off by unbelief; they belong to the kingdom of God. Then, are they not Christ's? I demand the law for cutting them off from the privilege once conferred upon them in this covenant, a privilege which they could not forfeit for themselves. If infants are Abraham's spiritual seed, they are in the covenant, and have a right to recognition by baptism. If they are Christ's, they are Abraham's seed; but if they are not Christ's, whose are they? How are they saved? How came they in the kingdom? Is their salvation by the death of Christ, or not? If not, why did Christ claim them, and recognize them as of the kingdom, and as believers? But if they are saved by Christ, they are his; they are in him—in the vine, the body, the kingdom, the Church; and if so, the New Testament token of the covenant belongs to them, as

surely as the Old Testament token did before the coming of Christ. Say not to me that they can not sustain covenant relations; the whole history of God's dealings with his people proclaims that they can. Say not that they may not be dedicated to him by parental authority; the plainest injunctions of parental obligation, in the Old Testament and in the New, point clearly to such dedication as right in itself, and as acceptable to God. Say not that no benefit can arise from such dedication; that is to question the wisdom of God's appointments, and to assume knowledge above the records of inspiration.

Perhaps there is as much hesitation at this point as at any point in the whole controversy. Because men can not see the good that comes directly to the child by baptizing it, they suppose no evil can result from neglecting it. So Abraham might have reasoned in regard to the circumcision of the child of eight days; and so might the Jewish parents have reasoned in regard to presenting their children before the Lord at forty days old, and making an offering for their redemption; but such excuses would not have been

accepted. God demanded the dedication of the children, and in those forms, under the Old Testament; and parents have never been excused from the duty, although the manner of dedication has been changed. The token of the covenant is still applicable, and he who refuses it should be sure of the ground beneath his feet; for, while rites and forms may change, principles are eternal, and the principle of infant dedication to God is here involved; and as the duty devolves on the parent, the benefit largely depends upon the parent's fidelity; and if the performance of so solemn a duty as dedicating his child to God, in recognition of covenant obligations, has no influence upon the heart of the parent, and no tendency to intensify his feeling of obligation to rear the child for God, and does not serve as a stimulus to claim the divine promises in behalf of his offspring, then my own conceptions of the elements of human character, and of the nature and purposes of religious services, are utterly at fault.

Discourse III.

THE ONENESS OF THE CHURCH.

"There is one body."—Eph. iv, 4.

THE apostle Paul frequently represented the Church as a body, and spoke of it particularly as the body of Christ, as distinguished from the body of his flesh. It includes all that are Christ's, all the covenanted people of God, all the subjects of his spiritual kingdom.

I shall therefore make an argument for infant baptism, drawn from the *substantial oneness of the Church of God through all the dispensations.*

This is an important matter, and deserves the most careful consideration. A vast deal of absurd prejudice has been excited at this point; and many honest people have been misled by false criticism, and have become bewildered in the mists of error, until they

could not perceive with clearness the sublime truth that God never founded but one Church on the earth, and that Christ never redeemed but one Church by the shedding of his precious blood.

Nor is it strange that the idea of the oneness of the Church should be perverted, after being admitted on the testimony of the Scriptures. We do not mean by it that all worshipers of God, who become members of the Church, must be enrolled under one ecclesiastical rule or authority. This thought is the distorted doctrine of the unity of the Church as held by the apostate Church of Rome. Nor do we understand that it is requisite that all shall practice the ordinances of the Church in precisely the same way. This would secure uniformity, if it were practicable; but uniformity is not unity. The center and source of unity is Christ; and the vital union with Christ that secures salvation secures the unity of the Church—the oneness of which we speak.

The word *ekklesia*—church—is from the verb *ekkaleo*. This verb expresses the act of *calling out*, collecting, or separating a class

of people from the mass, forming thereby an assembly, or congregation. The people thus called out, or separated, are the Church—the *ekklesia*—because they are separated and distinguished as a peculiar people. God had a people before the days of Abraham, but they were not called out or formed into a separate community. They were not, therefore, a visible Church. When God called Abram to separate himself from his home and kindred, the formation of the Church began; and when the covenant with that patriarch was established, and himself and household entered into it, the first organization of the Church took place. Ever since then, God has not only had a people, but a people *called out* and separated as his peculiar treasure, with ordinances to distinguish them from the world. These ordinances do not of themselves create any new relationship, but only recognize a previously existing one. That previously existing relationship gives the right to the ordinances; and if none received the ordinances except those fully entitled to them, none would be recognized as members of the visible Church but such as are really members of the body

of Christ, or seeking in penitence the way of salvation; and if all received the token of recognition who are members of Christ's body by spiritual union, and therefore entitled to it, all partakers of salvation through Christ would receive that mark of distinction, and thus be enrolled with the people of God. In that event, the visible Church would be a true manifestation of the kingdom of God. Every subject of that kingdom, whether adult or infant, would then, by outward consecration, be given to the Lord in covenant bonds, and wear the badge of membership in the family of God.

When the Church was first organized in the family of Abraham, infants were expressly included. They received the token of the covenant, and were distinguished as part of God's chosen people. They were certainly capable of being entered as parties to God's gracious covenant, for God commanded that it should be done. Their spiritual relation to the promised Redeemer secured their justification from original sin, and constituted them fit subjects for the Church of God. It seems to me that no one not blinded

by prejudice to the border of bigotry can dispute this for one moment. The Church, in which infants were placed, was then in its infancy; but it had in it all the elements of a real Church. It was afterward under a dispensation of pupilage. The law of Moses was its "schoolmaster." During the period of its minority, it was under "tutors and governors." But the dispensation of the law began and closed without destroying the life or the identity of the pupil. It was still the Church, advancing toward maturity. No act rescinding the act ordaining infant membership in the Church was ever passed. No act rescinding the original charter of the Church was ever passed; nor did God ever issue an order for establishing a new Church, after he made covenant with Abraham. The Savior organized no new Church. The apostles organized no new Church. The "new covenant" was the covenant with Abraham, unfolded, fulfilled, and confirmed of God in Christ. There never has been a moment, since Abraham and Isaac were circumcised, when God had no Church on the earth; neither has there been a time when he had

two Churches. The Church itself has survived all the changes of form and outward condition that have marked the different dispensations, as well as all the calamities and apostasies that have characterized its history. The form of worship has been changed, the rites and ceremonies have been modified—in a word, the whole machinery has been readjusted, as it must needs be, to meet the relation of the Church to the new order of things growing out of the death of Christ, the expiration of the ceremonial law, the cessation of the types, the institution of the sacraments, and the calling of the Gentiles. A new dispensation came, and a new token of the covenant was appointed, but the Church of God retained its identity. It continued to be the body of Christ, the kingdom of God, the Church which he purchased with his own blood—the only Church he ever had, ever bought, ever redeemed or saved. In the days of Elijah, when there was a great apostasy, and the prophet thought the Church was destroyed, and that he himself was left alone, God assured him that there were yet seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to

Baal. In the days of Christ there was a great apostasy. The great body of the Jews rejected the Messiah, and were cut off, excommunicated from the Church; but the Church was not destroyed. Even then, God did not cast away his people. There was a remnant left, "according to the election of grace." On the day of Pentecost, the new converts were "added" to the Church. They were not in the Church simply by virtue of being Jews. The Church was in the nation, but it was not the nation. The "congregation of the Lord" was distinct from the commonwealth; although, during the minority of the Church, its laws, and rites, and services were much interwoven with the civil institutions of the land. So when the kingdom of God was taken from the Jews, they were still a people, and are to this day, but not the people of God, within his covenant, and entitled to his favor. They were cut off through unbelief. But infants belonged to the kingdom of God still. They were never excommunicated, because they were never guilty of unbelief. Nothing else than that could unchurch them.

We must look closely as we proceed. What do we mean by the Church membership of infants? If infants are members of the Church of Christ, it will hardly be denied that they may be baptized. Infant Church membership and infant baptism stand or fall together. But what about their membership? God originally placed them in the covenant; but in what sense do they belong to the Church? Mark, I am not speaking of the Church in the lower applications of the term, as to the house of worship, or the congregation convened; nor am I speaking of any or all the ecclesiastical denominations; but of the Church of God, which embraces all his covenanted people, the mystical body of Christ. This Church is but another name for the kingdom of God on earth. All who belong to the kingdom—that is, all the subjects of salvation—belong to this Church. Nor am I speaking of belonging to the Church *in form;* that is, in the sense of actual recognition by the visible ordinance, which is the badge of membership, as it is the token of the covenant; for some who really belong to the kingdom may never be recognized by any

association of Christians, while others may be formally recognized who have no right to such distinction, by reason of lacking all spiritual qualifications. But I am speaking now of belonging to the Church *by right.* Every subject of Christ's kingdom has a right to be recognized as a member of Christ's Church. And this right does not depend on the ceremony that acknowledges it, nor does it grow out of any earthly or fleshly relationship. It arises solely from a spiritual relation to Christ. The giving of the ceremony can not create the right, nor can the withholding of the ceremony destroy it. If any subject of Christ's spiritual dominion is refused recognition, this does not destroy his relation to Christ, which is the foundation of all spiritual privileges; and if any hypocritical pretender should impose himself upon the Church, and obtain recognition as a member, he does not necessarily become a subject of the kingdom. In this state of imperfection, it is not possible to square the lines of the visible Church with those of Christ's kingdom; but if, owing to imperfect administration, any who ought to be recognized as members fail to obtain rec-

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ognition, the right will remain unimpaired, while the relation subsists in which it is founded. Hence, all who are in the visible Church without the necessary relation to the Savior are intruders; and all who are in Christ, in his spiritual kingdom, are entitled to recognition by the Church, in the appointed covenant rite.

The Church is set forth in the Scriptures under a variety of figures, as, a "vine," a "kingdom," a "building," a "body;" but, under all these representations, the Church is the same. The "branches" in the vine, the "subjects" in the kingdom, the "stones" in the building, and the "members" in the body, are all the same. All who are in the vine are in the kingdom, in the building, in the body, the Church. The vine is the Church, the kingdom is the Church, the building is the Church, and the body is the Church. Therefore, to be in the vine, or in the kingdom, or in the building, or the body, is to be in the Church, by right. This, it seems to me, is beyond dispute; and yet it is equally clear that all who are entitled to a place in the Church, by divine right, are

entitled to recognition by Christian baptism. In a former discourse, we found that infants are in the "kingdom," and that they are the models of fitness for that relation; it therefore follows that they are in the vine, in the building, in the body, the Church.

And Christ never had but one kingdom. The manifestation of that kingdom was not perfect under the former dispensation, while the Church was yet under "tutors and governors;" but it did exist, and in the eye of God its lines were as distinctly traced as in later times. God has but one "building," which is made up of "lively stones," a royal temple, built under the direction of the Supreme Architect, the Holy Spirit. It rests on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself the chief corner-stone. Into this building all the variety of material, gathered throughout the nations and the ages, is fitly framed together, making an holy temple, a habitation of God through the Spirit. Wrought into it were all the patriarchs and prophets, and all the saints and worthies of Old Testament times; and into this same building are wrought apostles and martyrs,

and all the saved under the Gospel. It is the grand spiritual edifice whose cap-stone will be brought with shoutings of grace, when the last sinner saved shall find his place in the holy temple of the Lord. And Christ has but one mystical body. The "body of his flesh" is always distinguished from "his body, the Church." "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Permit a longer quotation. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set

the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye can not say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor: and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Corinthians xii, 12–27.) Surely, if all this mean any thing, it means that Christ has but one body, and that all the subjects of

salvation through him, in every clime and age, are members in that one body.

But one question can be raised here, and that is whether this Church, which is the body of Christ, includes the membership of the Church under the Old Testament. It is sometimes urged that in the Old Testament Church there was a different covenant, a different priesthood, a different offering, and that the differences were sufficient to make a different Church. On the subject of the covenant, we said enough in the preceding discourse; and it is sufficient now to remark that all the priesthoods and offerings and bloody sacrifices and watery ablutions of the Old Testament were meaningless and void without Christ. Christ died for those who lived before his coming, as truly as he did for those who lived after his day. If we sit down in the kingdom of God, it will be with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There never was but one Savior, one Redeemer, one Mediator, one High-priest. All others were but types. Jesus Christ was "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He, by the grace of God, tasted death for every

man. The merits of his atonement rolled back to the first transgression and forward to the end of time, extending on either side to the uttermost limit of human guilt. Then was not Christ as truly the Savior of the Church before the incarnation as he has been since? Was he not with the Church in the wilderness? Was not his Spirit in the prophets? (1 Peter i, 10, 11.) Was he not in all the promises and types and ordinances of the Old Testament? Then will the Old Testament Church be saved? If so, will it be saved through Christ or not? If not, through whom? Where is there another Savior? But, if through Christ, how but through his death? Will there be any Church in heaven not redeemed with his blood? Will there be any human souls in heaven not of his Church? Will there be a Church there of which he is not the Foundation, the Head, the High-priest, and the Savior? It is time, you see, that we begin to look at the results of denying the oneness of the Church through all the ages. Such a denial involves the most appalling absurdities, and leaves us without the ability to explain God's dealings with the

ancients, or to understand the services of his Church or the meaning of the types.

In proof that Christ died for sinners who lived under the Old Testament, I present the following: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." (Hebrews ix, 15.) There is no denying this. Christ died for sinners who lived under the first testament. His was the only real sacrifice ever made, the only real atonement. He is the only foundation, the only hope; and that Church which is his body is the only Church.

Take a Scriptural illustration of this subject. I refer to the "olive-tree," which has often been employed in this service since Paul first gave it: "For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree; boast not against the

branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive-tree?" (Romans xi, 16–24.) What does this olive-tree represent? Upon the answer to this question must hinge the whole meaning of the passage. Objectors to the doctrine that the Church is one through all the dispensations, differ at this point. Indeed, nothing seems satisfactory to them that

they have been able to invent. Some tell us it represents Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation. But does the olive-tree represent Abraham? If so, the natural branches, on being broken off, would simply be broken off from being the natural descendants of Abraham! This can not be the meaning; and therefore the olive-tree does not mean Abraham. Others tell us that it means the New Testament Church, of which the apostles were the first-fruit and the root. But, if so, how were the Jews the natural branches of this tree? And how were they broken off from a tree they were never in? This will never do. The only sensible answer that can be given is that the olive-tree represents the *visible Church of God.* In fuller statement of the case, I lay down six propositions: 1. The tree represents the visible Church of God. 2. The natural branches were the Jews, the first in the covenant. 3. Only those guilty of unbelief were broken off. 4. The tree was not destroyed, only dismembered in part. 5. The calling of the Gentiles, and grafting them in, made no new olive-tree, no new Church. 6. The Jews are hereafter to be

grafted in again, not into a new tree, but into the same old olive-tree from which they were broken off—"into their own olive-tree." But no such thing could ever be, if the Church to which they belonged went out of existence with the passing away of the ceremonial law.

Now we are at a crisis in the argument. The visible Church is represented by the olive-tree. That olive-tree survived the breaking off of the natural branches. This means the exscinding of the Jews, who had been in the visible Church by sufferance, after they had lost all spiritual qualifications, until the time of excision came. Then they were rejected. The kingdom of God was taken from them. Infants were in this visible Church, and were recognized by the visible token of the covenant, under the express command of God. Were they cut off with the unbelieving Jews? Did the dismemberment of the olive-tree carry away these tender scions? Were they guilty of unbelief? Did Christ regard them as worthy of expulsion when he said, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not?" Did he regard them as

excommunicated when he said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven?"

But here comes another objection. It is asserted that the *ground* of infant membership in the Church, under the Abrahamic covenant, was a fleshly relation to Abraham, or purchase with money. Much has been made of the "fleshly relation," under the "old covenant," and the spiritual relation, under the new. We have seen what the "old covenant" was, and now we must dispose of this "fleshly relation." If the "fleshly relation" to Abraham were the ground of membership, none could enjoy membership without that "fleshly relation." But membership was never confined to the fleshly relation. Abraham's own children, and the children of servants, born in his house, and those bought with money, were treated alike. All received the token of the covenant. "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." Purchase with money was no ground of membership. Neither was the fleshly relation. Purchase with money brought the child of the stranger under the control of Abraham,

and the duty was imposed upon him to bring all that were under his control into covenant relation with God. This is all the purchase with money had to do with membership in the Church. The ground of the membership was something behind the fleshly relation, or the purchase with money. It was something in regard to which Abraham's children, and those bought of the stranger, occupied common ground. What could this be, except their spiritual relation to the promised Messiah? The spiritual aspect of the covenant must not be forgotten. It had reference to a spiritual seed, to spiritual blessings, and spiritual privileges. The promise, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee," implied spiritual privileges and blessings. The change of Abram's name related to the extension of the covenant to those not his descendants. The spiritual element ran through the whole covenant. Even that which was literal typified the spiritual. Therefore the idea that the covenant with Abraham, which gave membership to infants, related merely to the *flesh*, is not only unsupported, but it is false. This very covenant, that gave to

infants the first place in the Church, that required them to receive the sign of recognition, contained the promise of the Messiah, and that all nations should be blessed through him. It is, therefore, plain that the ground of infant membership in the covenant, and in the Church, was *identical with the ground of their salvation.* It was a spiritual relation to the promised seed. Abraham himself sustained the spiritual relation to his promised seed, the Messiah, which secured his justification, not by the flesh, but by faith; and his infant offspring sustained the same relation to Christ, without faith; therefore they were alike fit for the same token of the covenant, and they both received it. The ground of Church membership was then, as now, the ground of salvation. The sign of membership is the sign of salvation. Hence, those born in Abraham's house, and those bought with money, were given the religious rite of circumcision on the same terms. The "fleshly relation" was not the ground of it in any case. "The unconditional benefits of the atonement" reached back to the infant offspring of Abraham and to the children of the

stranger alike. No more deceptive figment of the imagination was ever palmed upon the credulity of honest people than that Church membership, under the Abrahamic covenant, was founded in a fleshly relation. It is pure fiction, as soulless and unsubstantial as an infant's dream. Would that it were as harmless! The more we examine this subject, the more clearly it appears that the ground of membership in the Church, under the covenant that first organized the Church and placed infants in it, is the identical ground of their membership in the kingdom of God to-day.

We come now to another vital question. Was there any religious meaning, or spiritual signification, in circumcision? Circumcision was the token of the covenant, given to Abraham and his infant child. It marked their covenant relation, and betokened to them the faithfulness of God, and pointed to the realization of all that was promised in the covenant. But it is now claimed that it was not a religious rite; that it was simply a fleshly ordinance, and had in it nothing of a religious or spiritual character. We see at a

glance how important this ground is to all anti-Pedobaptists, and they have not failed to make the most of it. But the position will not endure scrutiny. Time will permit only a hasty glance at the subject, and I shall prefer at once to take affirmative ground. I ask careful attention to the *religious meaning* of circumcision.

My purpose is to compare circumcision and baptism, and no mistake should be made in regard to the points of comparison. Circumcision is not baptism; nor is baptism like circumcision, in its nature, subjects, or design. There is a substantial difference between the two rites in all these respects. Nor need we be concerned about the manner in which baptism superseded circumcision. It is a fact, admitted on all sides, that circumcision was laid aside when the ceremonial law passed away, and that baptism was instituted, by the authority of Christ, as the badge of membership in the Church of God. These two rites differ widely in many things; but with the points of difference we now have nothing to do. Our business is with one single point of agreement. I speak of the

spiritual import of circumcision, and will show that that import is precisely the same as the spiritual import of baptism. Circumcision had a civil bearing, a relation to the Jewish nationality; but that is nothing to the question before us. It had a religious use, a spiritual significance. The outward rite imported the cutting off of the sinful propensities, the restraint of all wicked passions and indulgences. It symbolized the circumcision of the heart. Hence Paul said: "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Romans ii, 28, 29.) Circumcision was emblematical; it pointed to the moral purification of the heart. Hence the command, "Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked." (Deuteronomy x, 16.) Hence, also, the promise, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." (Deuteronomy xxx, 6.) These Scriptures show that the religious meaning

which Paul put upon the rite was not a mere figurative meaning, suggested by the spirituality of his Christian doctrine, but that it was its old and well-settled meaning under the law. It was a religious rite from the beginning, even before it was invested with any civil or national meaning.

In the case of Abraham, it had a religious meaning, most unquestionably. "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised." (Romans iv, 11.) Whatever else circumcision was made under the law, as a civil rite, it was, from its first appointment as the token of the covenant, a "seal of righteousness"—not of faith, nor of repentance, nor of obedience, but of "righteousness;" and righteousness here is to be taken in the sense of justification. "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness;" and this righteousness of faith was "sealed" by circumcision. It was a significant religious ordinance, and as such it was given to infants; not to seal their faith, for they did not exercise faith; nor to seal native holiness, for

they possessed nothing of the kind; but to seal their justification in the Lord Messiah, the seed of Abraham. It was to them the badge of their covenant relation. It marked them as belonging to the congregation of the Lord. It proclaimed them capable of receiving a religious rite, and able to sustain a covenant relation. Those who laugh at infant baptism would probably have ridiculed all this; but it was the appointment of the Lord notwithstanding. The Abrahamic covenant gave them this religious rite, and that covenant is the Gospel covenant. Only the temporal part of that covenant passed away by fulfillment, while all that was religious in it remains in full force under the New Testament; and infants are as capable of a religious ordinance now as they were then. The full development of the covenant under the Gospel does not restrict, but enlarges, the privileges of the covenanted people of God. It turns out none but the unbelieving. What, then, is the conclusion? Infants were in the covenant; they received the token; that was a religious rite; they were dedicated to God, and their covenant privileges have never been

curtailed. *And baptism, as a religious rite under the New Testament, possesses the same spiritual import and signification that belonged to circumcision under the Old Testament.* From this proposition there can be no dissent; and yet, if admitted, it will follow that no objection can be urged against infant baptism that might not have been urged with the same force against the circumcision of infants under the former dispensation.

Here we stand. The spiritual import of baptism is precisely what the spiritual import of circumcision was under the Old Testament. Baptism is a religious rite, as was circumcision. It is emblematical, as was circumcision. It symbolizes the cutting off of sin, or the moral purification of the heart, as did circumcision. It is the mark, or token, of recognition in the covenant or Church of God, as was circumcision. It therefore follows that baptism not only has the same meaning, but that it has the same use, or fills the same office, that belonged to circumcision. Of course, it has a wider application, as it belongs to a broader and freer dispensation—one in which there is neither Jew nor Greek,

bond nor free, male nor female, but all are one in Christ.

In confirmation of all this, I present the following: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Colossians ii, 10–12.) Upon this I remark: 1. The subject is our completeness in Christ. 2. The allusion to circumcision is not to its outward form, but to its spiritual import. 3. The allusion to baptism is not to its mode, but to its signification. 4. The experience which is illustrated by these two rites is the same. 5. In this twofold illustration of the same experience, the two rites are so blended and applied as to demonstrate the identity of their import. 6. The conclusion is that what circumcision was to the Jew, in its religious meaning, baptism is to the Christian. From this there is no escape.

No enlargement upon the civil bearing of circumcision, or setting forth of specific differences between other features of the two rites, will be of any avail in setting aside the force of this argument. If baptism is the same to the Christian that circumcision was to the Jew; if it occupies the same place in the Church, and has the same religious meaning, use, and design; if it is the seal of the same spiritual blessings and privileges, there is no power in the universe to prevent unprejudiced minds from believing that baptism is just as appropriate, and in every way as suitable to infants now, as circumcision was under the law. The "circumcision made without hands" was represented by the circumcision made with hands. It meant spiritual regeneration. This is precisely what baptism represents. The "old man," "the body of the sins of the flesh," is "put off," "crucified," "dead," "buried" in baptism. This is the moral result which baptism symbolizes. By this process of spiritual regeneration we are inducted into Christ, and being in him, the body of sin being destroyed, we set forth our union and completeness in him

by baptism. The conclusion, the outcome of the argument, is inevitable. The Church is the same; the covenant is the same; the token is the same in religious meaning, and involves no religious element or principle not found in the old form, in which, by express command of God, it was given to infants.

Here we conclude. The one Church is the body of Christ. It is the kingdom of heaven. It was begun as a visible organization in the family of Abraham, chartered by "the everlasting covenant" which God made with him who was to be the father of many nations. It continued to exist under the dispensation of the law, and survived the expiration of the law by limitation. It started into a new life under the Gospel, and will continue to be the Church and body of Christ until it shall be presented in the day of the Lord, a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. God never had any other Church. Christ never redeemed any other Church. The Holy Ghost never quickened any other Church. National distinctions are nothing here. This Church knows nothing of the kind. Questions of

ecclesiastical rule are foreign to its essential being; they form none of its actual characteristics, and affect not its integrity as the Church of God. Forms of worship, and modes and ceremonies, can neither make nor destroy it. Denominational distinctions sink out of sight in this presence. It is not the *Jewish* Church, nor the *Christian* Church. God never named his Church. His covenanted people are his *Church.* This is the only name given them as an association. There is nothing in the Scriptures about a Jewish or a Christian Church. The Church once existed principally among the Jews, but it was never a Jewish Church. It was never identical with the Jewish nation. Its ritual, under the Mosaic economy, should not be confounded with the civil polity of the nation. Many Jews were not accepted in the "congregation of the Lord," and many proselyted Gentiles were admitted to full fellowship. When the great body of the Jews were turned out, and the Gentiles called in, it did not become a Gentile Church. It was always God's Church, one and singular. Years after the full ushering in of the dispensation at Pentecost,

the disciples were called Christians at Antioch—by whom, no one knows. The name was given in ignorance, and as an epithet of reproach, but was afterward accepted as an honorable title, and so continues. If God had intended to give an authoritative name, he would have done it at the beginning, at Jerusalem. I care not, then, for names or ceremonies; nor am I concerned about changes in the government of the Church, in its form, its rites, or worship; nor does it matter that every typical institution was forever dissolved: the great truth remains that God's Church was not abolished. It only passed from the bondage of pupilage to the freedom of maturity, carrying to this higher plane all the spiritual seed of Abraham, the heirs of promise.

Discourse IV.

ORIGIN OF INFANT BAPTISM.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," etc.—Matt. xxviii, 19.

I PROPOSE, in this discourse, to trace the origin of infant baptism, and account for it as well as I can in the time at command; but we must first glance hastily at some objections to the practice which have not yet come under consideration.

It has been claimed that infants can not meet the design of the ordinance. Perhaps they could not fully, if they were always to remain infants; but the ordinance has reference to their future lives. It is a covenant act, and is intended to cover the whole life of the person receiving it, whether he be baptized in infancy, in youth, or in manhood. The significance of the rite is by no means restricted to the hour of its administration.

All the prayers and covenant forms adopted by the Church for this service contemplate the little ones as living, growing up, and being taught the nature of the ordinance and the obligations accompanying it. If they die in infancy, they are neither benefited nor harmed by baptism. In that event the design fails, of course, as life itself ceases and all earthly hopes fail; but, if they live, they can use their baptism, and make it the "answer of a good conscience" as well as if it were deferred until their mature years. The significance of the ordinance is met and kept fresh only by fulfilling the covenant engagements it implies. As, for instance, a young man, just entering the activities of manhood, accepts the Gospel and is baptized. He soon becomes involved in worldly pursuits, neglects duty, loses faith, and goes out of the Church. He continues a worldly man for twenty, thirty, or forty years, and then remembers his early vows, and penitently returns to Christ and the Church. His baptism is not repeated. Its design and significance had been lost by disobedience; but these are revived by returning faith. Only carry this

principle to the case of infants, and all is clear. If in after life they meet their covenant obligations, their baptism is as fresh and new and significant every morning as if just administered. As just remarked, it covers the whole life.

Baptism is a significant rite. It points to something inward and spiritual. It is the ordained emblem of salvation from sin, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, by the agency of the Holy Spirit. It is the ordinance of the Holy Ghost. It is designed to represent the whole office and work of the Spirit in the moral renovation of the soul. All the provision made for the salvation of any human soul is in the death of Christ; and all the application of that provision to the salvation of the soul is by the Holy Spirit. In the Lord's-supper, the bread and wine are emblems of the body and blood of Christ; and, in baptism, the water is the emblem of the Holy Spirit. All that are saved through Christ are saved by the agency of the Holy Spirit. Then, wherever the Holy Spirit goes in the functions of his office, there the water of baptism, the standing emblem, may go.

But the Spirit applies the atoning blood to all dying in infancy; therefore such may be baptized. And the Spirit also applies the blood of Christ to the justification of all infants, so as to constitute them subjects of the kingdom of heaven. Hence the language of our Church: "We hold that all children, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the kingdom of God, and therefore graciously entitled to baptism." Baptism is the emblem of the work of the Holy Spirit, and the seal of a gracious state. It is not an emblem or seal of faith; for then faith might be a prerequisite to baptism. It is not an emblem or seal of repentance; for then repentance might be deemed a qualification for baptism. Its emblematic use relates to the Spirit's work; and, as a seal, it marks our covenant relation and gracious acceptance in the beloved. And this emblematic use may be anticipatory or reflective; but its relation to the Spirit is fixed and unalterable.

It is urged that baptism implies an obligation to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. So it does; but it is not baptism that

imposes the obligation. The obligation to a holy life is from the Lord, and imperative. Nor is it necessary to wait until the person grows up and violates this obligation, before giving him the ordinance which points to it. Baptism, as before remarked, is not designed merely for the hour of its administration. It stands as the emblem of the Spirit's work, reminding us of our impurities and need of cleansing all through life; and if it can retain its significancy for thirty, fifty, or seventy years, pointing with all the vividness of a newly received ordinance to the covenant obligations which heaven has imposed, surely it does not lose its significancy by having been received before those obligations were felt.

It is also objected that infant baptism interferes with the freedom of choice. Let us see, if we can, wherein. The obligations it implies exist, whether the child be baptized or not; and I do not see that any thing which God has left to choice is hindered or forestalled by infant baptism. We have no right to choose whether we will be baptized or not; for baptism is duty, and to refuse to be baptized is an abuse of the power

of choice; therefore, when parents supersede the choice of their children in this regard by having them baptized in infancy, there is no right violated or infringed. Our ideas of the right of choice in matters pertaining to religion are often crude, and, unless guarded, will take unwarranted directions. The right of choice can only relate to modes and forms and things indifferent in themselves. The obligation to be baptized, and to do all the things that baptism implies, is not optional with us, but duty in the highest sense; and baptism, whenever received, points to the duty. Nor does infant baptism hinder any one from the performance of any service that the Lord requires. It leaves the conscience perfectly free, to the full extent to which God has invested it with freedom. Not a single burden does it impose which God has not imposed; and not a single fetter does it bind on the soul to cramp it, or to hinder it in coming freely to Christ, or to interfere with its doing from the heart any duty pertaining to the Christian life. How, then, does it interfere with choice in any thing that is left to choice?

This objection proves too much, if it prove any thing. If baptism in infancy interferes with choice, heart-work, or free action in any respect that violates rights, how much more does *early religious education!* The opposers of infant baptism will take hold of the tender, unsophisticated minds of their little ones, and instill into them thoughts, sentiments, principles, biases, and prejudices, and such peculiar views of religion as will influence and control them, and be as permanent as the mind itself. They hesitate not to take advantage of their children's ignorance and tenderness, and of their susceptibility to parental influence, to mold their religious character and direct their conduct and determine their Church relations, without any regard to their choice, or to what might afterward become their choice; and in all this they do right. No matter if in this way they impress upon their children views and principles, and bind upon their souls a set of notions, that will cleave to them in time and in eternity. They have the right to do so, and need only be careful to teach them the truth and commit them to the right. The responsibility to do all this is on the

parents; and there is an important sphere in which parents must act for their children—must think for them, control them, and do all they can to commit them to a life of obedience to God. How comes it, then, that they may teach their children, control them, and impress upon them lessons that will determine their whole future, and yet, if they enter them into God's covenant, and place upon them the badge of recognition in the Church, and thereby dedicate them to God's service, they are interfering with the rights of conscience or the freedom of choice? This objection, when simmered down to its proper substance, has nothing in it whatever. If there is any violation of rights in this connection, it is on the other side. Those who refuse to baptize the children, refuse them the privilege of recognition among the covenanted people of God. They refuse to receive them in the name of the Redeemer! They deny them a place in the kingdom of God! And then they cry out to us, as if by baptizing them, and thus bringing them into recognition as lambs in the Redeemer's fold, and placing upon them the mark or seal of

God's gracious covenant, as Abraham did, we were robbing them of some precious rights! But what right of choice in regard to baptism do anti-Pedobaptists give their children after they grow up? Do they allow them to choose the mode? Do they allow them any choice whatever other than to come to baptism in a certain form or stay away from all sacraments and Church privileges?

But it is insisted that the Scriptures make faith a prerequisite to baptism. This has been answered in part; but now I wish to remark that the Scriptures never make faith a prerequisite to baptism in any instance except where it is a prerequisite to salvation. In the case of unbaptized adults, who must repent and believe the Gospel in order to salvation, faith is properly required in order to baptism; but then the baptism relates to the salvation, and not to the faith. It is not a symbol of faith, nor a seal of faith, nor does it in any way represent faith, but only the salvation which faith secures. Then, wherever the salvation is, there baptism may go; and every argument that would deprive the infant of baptism for the want of faith,

would deprive it of salvation on the same ground.

But the passage in the great commission on which this objection is founded does not sustain it. In so far as the application to adults is concerned, we shall not dispute; but the language, rightly understood, is in complete harmony with infant baptism; and, addressed to the apostles, as it was, it would authorize them to practice infant baptism, in the absence of any prohibition, as we shall shortly see. But now I direct attention to the fact that the commission does not fix the relative order of baptism and faith. It requires both, but does not say which shall come first. In Matthew xxviii, 19, the reading is, "Go ye therefore, and teach (*matheteusate*, disciple) all nations, baptizing them." The first thing to do is to "*disciple* the nations," and this by baptizing them. In Mark xvi, 15, 16, the reading is: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The baptized believer shall be saved. Who is he? He that believes, and

keeps the covenant obligations of his baptism. But what about the order? "He that believeth, *having been* baptized, shall be saved," is the literal rendering. The participial form of the verb, *baptistheis*, with the aorist tense, fully justifies this rendering. Then, the relative order of the believing and being baptized is not definitely fixed. The time of the baptism is not specified; so I come back to the point, that the act of faith is not a prerequisite to baptism, only where it is to salvation; and when the baptism precedes the faith, as with infants, the full demand of the general commission is met. And when infants are "discipled" by baptism, and then taught, the order of the commission, as given by Matthew, is literally kept.

And, now, I assume that the apostles would baptize the children, under this commission, unless prohibited by express instruction to the contrary.

I argue this, not from the rendering already given to the command to baptize the nations, but from their habits and impressions as Jews. They knew that children had been associated with their parents in covenant and

Church relations ever since the days of Abraham, and they had never known a Church from which the little ones were excluded. They were familiar with the fact that, under the Old Testament, the rite of circumcision was given them as a religious act. Therefore they could not have been prejudiced against infant membership; and they certainly had not forgotten the Master's teaching in regard to the relation of infants to the kingdom of God. All these facts would predispose them toward infant baptism. But more than this. They were familiar with the religious use of water, in all those services among the Jews which gave rise to the practice of baptisms. In a word, they were accustomed to baptism, as it had been practiced in their nation for some hundreds of years; and to the baptism of infants as well as adults. The numerous "washings" imposed by the law, including ceremonial purifications after touching the dead, and after contact with unclean persons, and in the performance of religious duties, were called baptisms, long before the coming of Christ. These are the "divers baptisms,"

translated "divers washings," in the Epistle to the Hebrews. To these must be added the ceremonial baptisms enjoined by tradition, which the Jews regarded with equal respect, and observed with punctilious carefulness. It is to these "baptisms" the Savior alludes, when he says, Mark vii, 3, 4: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from market, except they wash (*baptisontai*) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing (*baptismous*) of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables." Now, these baptisms, although possessing no higher authority than tradition, had taken such hold on the mind of the Jewish nation, that all classes were familiar with them, and they would inevitably give color to any general command the Savior would give to baptize the people, preparatory to instructing them in the doctrines and duties of a holy life.

And to all this—in order to reach the surroundings of the apostles, and the influences arising from familiar customs that would affect

their minds in the interpretation of the general command to baptize—must be added the ancient and continued practice of baptizing proselytes and their families, including infant children.

This brings up the question of *proselyte baptism*—a question which has not always been fairly treated. The opposers of infant baptism have labored to throw discredit on the testimony that supports it, mainly because Josephus and Philo say nothing about it. But these authors did not write on subjects that necessarily involved that question, and we might as well infer, from their silence, that it was so common and well understood as to escape mention in that way, as that they knew nothing about it. Much, also, is said in opposition, about the absurdity or unreasonableness of supposing our Lord and Savior learned his doctrines, and received his institutions, from the Jews, or any other human source. But this difficulty is all imaginary, and creates a false issue. When we appeal to the practices which were familiar, we do not intimate that Jesus Christ learned from them, or founded his institutions upon them;

nor do we suppose that, so far as he adopted them, or allowed his disciples to follow them, he attached to them the same meaning, in every respect, that the Jews did. But that he did take baptism as an existing Jewish practice, and give it a new application, is known beyond question. And that he took the Jewish feast of the Passover, and changed it slightly in form, and turned it into the perpetual memorial of his death, is well known. And it is known that he adopted no new form of worship for the congregations of his people, but allowed them to follow the customs of the synagogues in this important respect. Then, why should we not suppose that the custom of the Jews, with reference to the baptism of proselytes, would affect the minds of the apostles, in construing and applying the words of the general commission to "disciple the nations, baptizing them?" There is not only no reason for disallowing this, but the highest reason for it; and this is all we claim in our appeal to proselyte baptism. We do not argue that it is right for us because the Jews practiced it; nor that Christ learned it from them; nor that he founded

his command on their custom; but, simply, that he and his disciples were familiar with it, as a Jewish rite, and that, in adapting baptism to the Gospel purpose, he took it as he found it, gave a new meaning and application to it, and yet that he did not prohibit its application to infants. And we hold that this fact, in connection with his own recognition of infants as "of the kingdom," and his command that they be "received in his name," and calling them believers, and the other fact that they had always been in the covenant, by circumcision, would influence the apostles in favor of infant baptism; so that, without a positive prohibition, they would practice it, under the command to disciple all nations.

It is now generally admitted by the learned that the Jews practiced infant baptism in receiving the families of Gentiles that were proselyted to the Jewish religion. The evidence of this fact is cumulative, and of sufficient force to satisfy such men as Selden, Lightfoot, Wall, Dantz, Wetstein, Beza, Buxtorf, Witsius, and many others, men of the highest repute for learning, who have examined the

subject thoroughly, from the most original sources. Some others, of good standing for general learning, express doubts; but those doubts are connected with erroneous views of the uses made of the fact, or with evident lack of thorough examination. The decided preponderance of testimony is in favor of the antiquity of the practice, when Christ taught in the Temple and synagogues of the Jews. The Talmudic writings of the Jews speak of this practice, and some look upon it as coming down from the days of Jacob. The Mishna, which dates back to near the time of Christ, and is a faithful compilation of older Jewish writings and oral traditions, and unquestionably gives the most accurate and minute ideas of the Jewish doctrines and religious rites accessible, gives testimony to the practice of baptizing infants. The Talmud of Babylon says: "When a proselyte is received, he must be circumcised: and when he is cured they baptize him in the presence of two wise men, saying, 'Behold, he is an Israelite in all things." The Jerusalem Mishna says that "if a girl, born of heathen parents, be made a proselyte after she be three years

and a day old," then she is not to have such and such privileges. The Babylonian Mishna says, "If she be made a proselyte before that age, she shall have the said privileges." The Gemara, which is a Jewish Commentary on the Mishna, says, "They are wont to baptize such in infancy, upon the profession of the house of judgment, for this is for its good."* The Gemara of Babylon also says, "The proselytes entered into covenant by circumcision, baptism, and sprinkling of blood."

The fact in question is not only established by the direct testimony of the Jews themselves, but by the indirect allusions of others. According to Dr. Lardner, Epictetus lived and wrote A. D. 109, and according to Le Clerc, some five years earlier; and being about sixty years old at the time, his personal information reached back to the times of the apostles. In reproving those who professed to be *philosophers*, and did not live according to their profession, Epictetus says: "Why do you call yourself a stoic? Why do you deceive the multitude? Why do you pretend to be a *Greek* when you are a *Jew*, a

* Wall

Syrian, an *Egyptian?* And when we see one wavering, we are wont to say, This is not a *Jew*, but acts one. But when he assumes the sentiments of one who hath been *baptized* and circumcised, then he both really is and is called a Jew. Thus we, falsifying our profession, are Jews in name, but in reality something else." This allusion to baptism in connection with circumcision, and assuming the sentiments of the Jews, shows it to be a clear recognition of the Jewish custom of baptizing proselytes, and, being only incidental, is so much the more convincing. Although it does not mention infants, it bears on the main question of proselyte baptism; and all concede that the notions of the Jews respecting "clean" and "unclean" persons would compel them to baptize the children with the parents, if that was really their way of cleansing proselytes from the defilements of paganism. Maimonides, the great interpreter of Jewish law, who lived in the twelfth century, and wrote without any bias of mind on this subject, but simply as an expounder of the sacred customs of his people, gives explicit testimony. He says: "Israel was

admitted into covenant by three things; namely, by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice. Baptism was in the wilderness before the giving of the law." Again: "Abundance of proselytes were made in the days of David and Solomon, before private men; and the great Sanhedrim was full of care about this business; for they would not cast them out of the Church, because they were baptized." (Issure Biah., c. 43.) "Once more, whenever any heathen . . . will take the yoke of the law upon him, circumcision, baptism, and a voluntary oblation, are required. . . . That was a common axiom, no man is a proselyte until he be circumcised and baptized." (Jevamoth, fol. 46.) Maimonides says, further: "They baptize also young children. They baptize a little proselyte according to the judgment of the Sanhedrim; that is, as the gloss renders it, if he be deprived of his father, and his mother brings him to be made a proselyte, they baptize him (because none becomes a proselyte without circumcision and baptism) according to the judgment, or rite, of the Sanhedrim; that is, that three men be present at the

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baptism, who are now instead of a father to him. And the Gemara a little after says, if with a proselyte his sons and his daughters are made proselytes also, that which is done by their father redounds to their good." "If an Israelite find a Gentile child, or a Gentile infant, and baptize him . . . behold, he is a proselyte." (Maim. in Avid. c. 8.)

It is conceded that the Jews practiced proselyte baptism immediately *after* the apostolic day. We therefore properly inquire concerning the origin of the practice among them. Were they in condition to adopt new customs, and especially in regard to proselyting, now that their Temple and city were in ruins, and the glory of their nationality and religion was prostrate in the dust, and they the scattered and peeled people which they became after the destruction of their city by the Romans? At the time of Christ, and before his day, the spirit of proselyting ran high. To this the Savior alluded in his withering rebuke, Matthew xxiii, 15: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make

him twofold more a child of hell than yourselves." Their religion was then popular, and they were in condition to make proselytes, and did it; but in a few years all was changed with them. In laying down the conditions of discipleship, it is well known that Christ had particular reference to the conditions of receiving proselytes among the Jews; so that there can be no doubt that he adapted to his use all that was capable of adaptation in their practices. It is sometimes averred that the Jews copied baptism from John, who was a Jew, and was looked upon by the Jews as a prophet of their own. But they could not copy infant baptism from John, unless John himself practiced it, to admit which is as fatal as to concede the whole ground. The fact that John's baptism created no surprise to the Jews, and elicited no inquiry as to its meaning, but did impress them that he was a prophet, shows that they understood the rite, and expected a divinely commissioned teacher to practice it. Hence, the Jews went to John, not to ask the meaning of a new and unknown practice, but to ask, "*Who art thou?*" and upon being told

that he was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet for whom they were looking, they ask, "*Why baptizest thou then*, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" Here is satisfactory evidence that the Jews were acquainted with the rite, and that it was employed in making disciples. In addition to this, it must be borne in mind that the Jewish washings were called baptisms by themselves and by the sacred writers; so that the proof is positive that the Jews practiced baptism among themselves, and supposed it derived from the law of Moses. Then we must still add the fact that the law enjoined the same practice with regard to proselytes that they observed themselves. The following is the law: "One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you [proselyte], an ordinance forever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you." (Numbers xv, 15, 16.) Now, if in the days of Christ the Jews called their watery ablutions baptisms, and if they

washed proselytes from pagan defilements, as they must before associating with them, then we have proselyte baptism fairly deduced from the law. No matter if the word baptize is not in the law. The thing which the Jews, in the natural changes of their language from Hebrew to Greek, and their mingling with other peoples after their captivity in Babylon, called baptism, and practiced under that name, is in the law; and the law was the same with themselves and the proselytes.

But not only did the Jews not manifest surprise or betray ignorance of the rite when John began to baptize, but they readily submitted to it. To my mind, the readiness with which the whole people of the Jews, of all classes and all professions, lawyers, soldiers, tradesmen, from the city and the country, from the mountains and the deserts, flocked to John's baptism, asking nothing of its origin or history, but only its design, is an overwhelming argument in favor of the proposition that baptism was familiar to all the Jews. This fact, with the designation of Jewish washings under the law as "divers baptisms," in Hebrews ix, 10, and the des-

ignation by the Savior of their ceremonial washings after returning from market as baptisms, presents the matter not merely in the light of reasonable inference, but in the light of unquestionable proof; and I feel justified in claiming that the proof is so clear and striking that it can not be put aside by any easy expressions of doubt.

Then, again, as before remarked, there is no disputing the fact that the Jews practiced baptism—infant baptism, too—in a short time after the apostolic age. Whence did they derive the practice? They did not learn it from pagans, for pagans did nothing of the kind; and their national repugnance to paganism forbids the idea that they copied it from heathen ceremonies. Nor is it likely that they copied it from the Christian Church. To assume this is to concede the practice in the Church to have a close proximity to apostolic times. But the violent antagonism between Christianity and Judaism forbids any such assumption. The truth is, the origin of the practice, among Jews or Christians, is absolutely unaccountable except on the hypothesis here presented. The opposition have

never been able to find a period in the history of Judaism or Christianity when infant baptism was certainly unknown or rejected; and no reasonable hypothesis has ever been devised to account for its origin as an innovation, while the whole line of concurrent tradition, with Judaism and Christianity, assigns it an origin in the imperative requirements of the law, long anterior to the time of Christ. The probabilities in favor of the correctness of this account of its origin are at least as a thousand to one. Indeed, when the full force of the cumulative testimony is gathered into one view and compared with the utter barrenness of the opposing assumptions, I see not how candid minds, accustomed to balancing probabilities and weighing testimony, can possibly be in doubt. All the conditions are favorable to this view, while enough of the factors in the problem are substantiated by testimony to render the conclusion next to inevitable.

The proofs of ancient proselyte baptism are so overwhelming that not only the most learned men who were unprejudiced have accepted it, as we have seen, but even Mr.

Booth, a distinguished Baptist writer, has been constrained to admit that "the children of proselytes were probably baptized along with their parents." Stackhouse says: "The custom of the Jews, in all ages, has been to receive their heathen proselytes by baptism, as well as by sacrifice and circumcision." Dr. A. Clarke, Calmet, Witsius, Wall, and many others affirm the same; and here I present, by way of conclusion on this point, the language of Dr. Woods, quoted by Dr. Hibbard, not for the authority of these names, but for the argument so clearly presented:

"*First.* The rabbins unanimously assert that the baptism of proselytes had been practiced by the Jews in all ages, from Moses down to the time they wrote. Now, these writers must have been sensible that their contemporaries, both Jews and Christians, knew whether such a practice had been prevalent or not; and, had it been known that no such practice existed, would not some Jew have been found bold enough to contradict such a groundless assertion of the rabbins? At least, would there not have been some Christians, fired with the love of truth, and jealous for the

honor of a sacred rite first instituted by Christ, who would have exposed to shame those who falsely asserted that a similar rite had existed for more than a thousand years? But neither of these things was done.

"*Second.* Had not the Jews been accustomed to baptize proselytes previously to the Christian era, it is extremely improbable that they would have adopted the practice afterward; for their contempt and hatred of Christianity exceeded all bounds, and must have kept them at the greatest possible distance from copying a rite peculiar to Christians.

"*Third.* It seems to have been perfectly *consistent* and proper for the Jews to baptize proselytes; for their divine ritual enjoined various purifications by washing or *baptism;* and, as they considered all Gentiles to be *unclean,* how could they do otherwise than understand the divine law to require that when any of them should be proselyted to the Jewish religion, they should receive the same sign of purification as was, in so many cases, applied to themselves?"

Now, the proposition with which we started was that the apostles would baptize whole

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families, including infants, under the general commission, unless prohibited by positive instruction, which prohibition was never laid upon them. Dr. Lightfoot presents this point so forcibly that I introduce his words: "To the objection, It is not commanded to baptize infants, therefore they are not to be baptized, I answer: It is not forbidden to baptize infants, therefore they are to be baptized. And the reason is plain; for, when *Pedobaptism* in the *Jewish* Church was so known, usual, and frequent in the admission of proselytes that nothing almost was more known, usual, and frequent, there was no need to strengthen it with any precept, when baptism was now passed into an evangelical sacrament. For Christ took baptism into his hands and into evangelical use as he found it, this only added that he might promote it to a worthier *end* and a larger use. The whole nation knew well enough that little children used to be baptized; there was no need of a precept for that which had ever by common use prevailed. . . . On the other hand, therefore, there was need of a plain and open prohibition that infants and little children should not

be baptized, if our Lord would not have them baptized; for, since it was most common in all preceding ages that little children should be baptized, if Christ had been minded to have that custom *abolished*, he would have openly forbidden it; therefore his silence and the silence of Scripture in this matter confirms *Pedobaptism*, and continues it to all ages." To this I need only add that the argument, as now developed, is not based on the silence of the Scriptures alone, but on the positive proofs of ancient customs, in connection with a broad command to disciple all nations, which covers the whole ground, and requires this wide application, unless positively restricted. The silence of the Scriptures, in regard to *restricting* this universal commission, is the silence which speaks with such eloquent significance in this discussion.

We have the right, in view of the facts now presented, to claim that infant baptism is not a separate and distinct rite, requiring a positive precept for its introduction into the Church under the Gospel, as its enemies continually imply. It is involved in the commission to baptize; and it devolves on the

opposition to show either that infants are excepted from the commission, or that the rite now, in its new relation, involves a principle or condition that renders it inapplicable to them. This has been undertaken; and we considered the strength of the position, in noticing the objections, at the beginning of this discourse. That the undertaking has failed must be manifest to all who intelligently weigh the testimony in the case.

Discourse V.

HISTORICAL ARGUMENT.

"And I baptized also the household of Stephanas."—1 Cor. i, 16.

I PURPOSE no extended argument on the subject of household or family baptisms, but remark that the incidental allusions thereto, in the Acts and Epistles, are just such as might be expected, if the practice was common, and had been familiar to all classes for many years. The record on this subject is not such as it would have been if the institution had been entirely new, and there had been a set purpose to establish its validity by this method of indicating apostolic practice. In that case, there would have been, in all probability, a special mention of infants, as composing in part the household. But, as was shown in the preceding discourse, the practice was not new; the Jews were

familiar with it; they had practiced family baptisms, in admitting proselytes, for many years, including children of all ages; so that, to them, the general statement that a household had been baptized would convey the idea that the children were included.

In the three cases of household baptisms mentioned in the New Testament, there is no direct mention of children; nor is there any thing that would prevent the supposition that there were children in some or all the families. The mention of a family, or household, naturally suggests the idea of children of different ages, yet under parental control; for such is the normal family, and such, we may say, is the average family, in almost any country. But here are three families, not selected for a purpose, nor specially described as being unlike the average families, in which baptism was administered; so that the allusion to the fact corresponds exactly to what we would expect to be said if the family baptism had corresponded in all respects to the ancient custom of baptizing households proselyted to Judaism. The record, to say the least, is very loose, and well

calculated to mislead, if it is not lawful to baptize the average family; and more particularly is this true, when we take into account the habits and customs of the times, when family baptisms, including infants, were very common, and very familiar to all the people. We can not, indeed, with any show of reason, affirm positively that there were no children in either of these families; nor can we doubt that these are more than illustrations of apostolic practice. These three instances are incidentally mentioned in connection with Paul's own ministry, not intimating that they are all the family baptisms that occurred under his ministry, nor saying any thing about instances of a similar kind in the ministry of the other apostles. The fact of family baptisms, in apostolic practice, is before us, and under all the circumstances of the case this fact is decidedly favorable to the view we have taken of the interpretation of the general commission to "disciple the nations, baptizing them," which the apostles would most probably make, under the circumstances.

And with these remarks on apostolic

practice, I now turn attention to the historical argument on this subject. We have given a rational account of the origin of infant baptism, among the Jews, prior to the Christian era, and substantial proof of its prevalence when Christ began his ministry; and we have found no word or act or hint, from him or his apostles, in opposition to it, but, on the contrary, much that can not be explained except as favorable to the practice; and we have seen clearly that the principles on which the Church is founded, and the covenant which is its divinely given charter, all sanction the recognition of the little ones as of the covenant and of the kingdom, so that a positive prohibition of their baptism was necessary to prevent it under the general commission: and now, if we trace the practice in the Church to a point so near the apostolic age that the idea of its springing up after their day as an innovation is utterly unreasonable and preposterous, we shall have so far gained the argument that, unless the opposition give a better account of its origin among the Jews, and show a positive prohibition of it in the Scriptures,

or else prove its origin as an innovation in the Church, the only conclusion which will accord with reason is that infant baptism was authorized by Christ, and sanctioned by apostolical usage.

I do not appeal to tradition or history as primary authority for this practice, but only as collateral evidence, having bearing upon our judgment as to what was the practice of the apostles. Nothing is asked or based upon the opinions of the post-apostolic fathers. They were men, weak and fallible like ourselves, but they were honest and competent witnesses in a question of fact, with which they were conversant; and it is only as witnesses of fact that I propose to examine their testimony. Nor can I more than indicate the line and substance of the argument.

Infant baptism exists in the Church, and is interwoven with the history of the Church from the earliest days. It had a beginning. Some one must have baptized the first infant. But neither the fact, nor the occasion of its origin, can be found this side the days of the apostles. Baptism was unquestionably administered to infants as near the apostolic

age as history can take us, and it was administered by the great body of the Church, without murmur, complaint, or debate. For the space of eleven hundred years after the birth of Christ, there was not a single society of Christians, on the face of the earth, that called in question the propriety of infant baptism, on any ground or plea whatever; and it was not opposed on the ground now taken against it by anti-Pedobaptists for fifteen hundred years after the Christian era. At the present time, all the great branches of the Church baptize infants—Greek, Coptic, Roman Catholic, and Protestant—except those denominations which have, in modern times, fallen into the notion that immersion is the only baptism; and all these have practiced it from the beginning of their history. Go back to the twelfth century, and the practice was universal. Go back to the sixth century, and the same is true. Go back to the third century, and there is not a syllable of testimony that any Church in the world refused to baptize infants. Then, if it was an innovation, brought into the Church without authority from the apostles, there ought to be at least

some record, somewhere, that would indicate the existence of agitation or debate; or that would show some reason for its acceptance. But there is not to be found the slightest trace of any agitation, surprise, defense, apology, or debate, to show that any one questioned the apostolical authorization of the practice. Innovations were introduced in those times, but not without opposition. The use and worship of pictures may be taken as an example. This innovation gained a footing, and made rapid progress in the Church; but it excited warm debate, and the agitation continued for about eight hundred years. Then, it seems reasonable to suppose that, if the baptism of infants started up as a novelty, and spread throughout the Christian world, just at the time other novelties were being so hotly debated, there ought to be detected, somewhere in the controversial writings of the Fathers, some sort of allusion to the fact, that could be construed to show that somebody knew that it was an innovation. But we search all these in vain for any such allusion. On the contrary, we find in those writings a state of facts utterly irreconcilable with any other

hypothesis than that the whole Church, at that time, fully believed the practice to have descended from the founders of Christianity, with divine sanction. It is that the writers of the second and third and fourth centuries engaged in earnest theological disputations, on subjects which involved the practice of infant baptism, and required the expression of opinions respecting its import and usefulness, and the reasons for its existence; and yet, in their warmest controversies, while they alluded to it, and spoke of its bearing on the points in dispute, not one of them called in question its descent from the apostles, or hinted at a different origin.

Passing over the explicit testimonies, direct and indirect, of a later date, connected with the Pelagian controversy, I begin with the well-known fact which has often been cited in this controversy, and proves beyond question the universality of infant baptism in the Church at the period to which it belongs. I refer to the discussion of the subject in the Council of Carthage. In the year of our Lord 253, sixty-six bishops of the Church were assembled in Council, in the city of

Carthage. This Council represented very nearly, if not quite, the whole Christian world, and undoubtedly reflected the sentiments of the Church in every part of the earth. One feature of infant baptism came before that body for consideration, and was discussed and passed upon; but it was not any thing that implied a doubt as to the divine authority for the practice, or of its universality in the Church. The subject was brought up by one Fidus, an obscure country bishop, who was probably not at the Council, but asked of it a decision of the question whether it was necessary to delay the baptism of the child until the eighth day after its birth, making the law of circumcision the rule governing the time of baptism. This question was entertained in the Council, and a decision rendered, which decision we now have. The Council answered Fidus thus:

"We read your letter, dearest brother, in which you write of one Victor, a priest, etc. . . . But as to the case of infants: whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born; and that the rule of circumcision is to be

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observed, so that none should be baptized or sanctified before the eighth day after he is born; we were all, in our assembly, of the contrary opinion. For, as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one of your mind; but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born."

This is a remarkable paper, in some respects; and on the single point of the universality of infant baptism, at the date of that Council, it is conclusive. Just think of it. Here, in A. D. 253, within one hundred and sixty years of the time when the apostle John was yet in the ministry, in so large an assembly of chief ministers, representing so large a part of Christendom, there is not a single voice against infant baptism, and not one in favor of delaying the rite till the child is eight days old! This fact proclaims with tremendous emphasis the universality of the practice, and the utter absence of doubt with respect to its authority. If the practice had been of recent origin, or of questionable authority, or limited acceptance in the Church, it is inconceivable that such a council, with

the learned Cyprian as one of its members, could have rendered such a decision, with such unanimity. These bishops were not careless respecting innovations, nor were the Fathers of the Church that preceded them. Indeed, there seems to have been among them a peculiar sensitiveness concerning the introduction of novelties. They cherished intense veneration for the example of those who had seen the Lord on earth, and stood guard over the institutions transmitted to them, watching with jealous eye every departure from established usage; and, although they did not always succeed in preventing abuses, they produced agitation, at least, upon every violation of apostolic example. Every innovation created disturbance; but we read of no disturbance on this subject.

The first opposition to infant baptism, of which we have any knowledge, was by Tertullian, an eccentric genius, who flourished about the close of the second century and the beginning of the third. He was made presbyter in the Church of Carthage, A. D. 192. He wrote much that was useful on moral subjects, and in defense of Christianity,

but was always distinguished for erratic notions in speculative matters. His opposition to infant baptism was one of his freaks, and proves its existence and general prevalence, and the absence from his mind of any settled convictions hostile to the rite. So far from this, he recognized it as based on the teachings of Christ, and opposed it only on prudential grounds. He never objected to it as an innovation upon primitive usage, nor as a thing improper in itself; but, having imbibed erroneous views of the design of baptism, his opposition grew out of his own wrong ideas. Like some of our own day, Tertullian had fallen into the notion that baptism was a condition of pardon, or that, instead of being an emblematic washing, it was a real washing away of sin; and he had reached the conclusion that sins committed after baptism possessed peculiar heinousness, if they could be forgiven at all: so he advised that baptism be delayed till late in life. His object was to wash away the sins of a life-time at one baptism. In this he was consistent as well as prudent—only he did not consistently adhere to this ground, but sometimes urged

baptism without delay. We will hear some of his reasoning on the subject:

"But they whose duty it is to administer baptism are to know that it must not be given rashly. 'Give to every one that asketh thee' has its proper subject, and relates to almsgiving; but that command rather is to be here considered, 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine;' and, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partakers of other men's faults.' Therefore, according to every one's condition and disposition, and also their age, the delaying of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of little children; for what need is there that the godfathers should be brought into danger? Because they may either fail of their promise by death, or they may be mistaken by a child's proving of a wicked disposition. Our Lord says, indeed, 'Do not forbid them to come to me.' Therefore, let them come when they are grown up; let them come when they understand, when they are instructed whither it is that they come; let them be made Christians when they can know Christ. What needs their guiltless

age make such haste to the forgiveness of sins? Men will proceed more cautiously in worldly matters; and one who is not trusted with earthly substance is trusted with the heavenly. Let them know how to ask for salvation, that you may seem to have given to one that asked. For no less cause must the unwedded also be deferred," etc.

The argument is that baptism would be more profitable if delayed till the child could be instructed in relation to the meaning of forgiveness, and of salvation through Christ, and particularly in regard to the enormity of sins committed after baptism; and until the fervor of passion had passed, so that the temptation to sin after baptism would be less powerful and more certainly resisted. On this same ground, he advised the delay of the baptism of all unmarried persons; so that the opposition of this man to infant baptism proves it to have been the common practice of the Church, and shows that in his day the idea of its being an innovation had not yet originated. The only question raised in regard to this testimony is as to whether Tertullian spoke of "infants" properly, or of

little children, who, in our day, would be considered capable of believing; but there is really no ground for this question. The word *parvulos* means infants, as well as little children in general; but the ambiguity of the word is overcome and its application settled by his other allusions to their condition; for, observe: 1. The little children are such as can not ask for salvation. 2. They had sponsors or godfathers to act for them as infants. 3. It was before their moral dispositions were developed, and before they could know Christ. There can be no doubt, therefore, that he spoke of infants.

Our next witness is the celebrated Greek father, Origen, who was perhaps the most learned man in the Church in his day. He was a native of Egypt, born A. D. 185, his father suffering martyrdom when the son was seventeen years old. He received a good education, in philosophy and rhetoric in particular, which gave him a thirst for knowledge, and inspired him with energy to pursue his studies by reading and traveling. His grandfather was a Christian, and it is probable that his ancestors were converted in the apostles'

days. His mind was capacious and active, and he became learned in the languages and literature of his times, and traveled extensively, making careful investigation of whatever could interest the Christian student. The eccentricities which detracted from the value of his expositions by no means interfered with his integrity of character or affected his reliability as a witness. Origen testifies unequivocally to the fact of infant baptism in his day, and declares that the Church had an order or tradition from the apostles to give them this rite. His testimony is exceedingly valuable, and the only effort made to destroy its force is to reproach his opinions and fault the speculations in which he indulged with reference to the reasons for baptizing infants; but the fact that Origen attempted to explain the reasons for this rite, and gave opinions as to the necessity of it, proves that he found it in the Church, and believed it to have come down from the apostles. Indeed, the practice in his day was universal, so far as is known, and unchallenged; and we have nothing to do with his conjectures as to the necessity and uses of it, but only with the fact, con-

cerning which he was so intelligent and competent a witness.

Origen says: "Besides all this, let it be considered what is the reason that, whereas the baptism of the Church is given for the forgiveness of sins, infants also are by the usage of the Church baptized, when, if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them." (Eighth Homily on Leviticus.) In speaking of infants as affected by original sin, he says: "*Pro hoc ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam parvulis baptismum dari.*" "For this the Church received from the apostles an order even to give baptism to infants." (Com. on Epis. to Romans.) Again, he says: "Having occasion given in this place, I will mention a thing that causes frequent inquiries among the brethren. Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? or when have they sinned? or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to the sense that we mentioned even now: 'None is free from pollution, though his life be but the length of a day upon the earth?' And it is

for that reason—because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away—that infants are baptized." The "*traditionem*" in the quotation above means any unwritten precept, injunction, order, or command. The modern use of tradition scarcely gives the force of the word as it was understood then. It was a tradition that was deemed binding, an "order" orally delivered. The Church in Origen's time received this order as carrying obligation with it, and entertained no doubt of its genuineness. Of course, it was not a verbal order that leaped over the heads of the intervening generations of Christians, making it the duty of the Church to do now what had not been done before; but, as certainly as Origen traced the order or tradition back to the apostles, he traced it in connection with the practice of the Church through all the intervening years, a task for which his competency will not be questioned.

And now, before citing testimony that reaches back to an earlier period, I wish to remark several things that bear upon the general argument. It should be distinctly

understood that, in quoting these post-apostolic fathers, we are not indorsing their opinions. We are not at all concerned about their speculations in theology. Many of them had fallen into serious error in doctrine, and indulged speculations which seem to us childish, although they treated them with great solemnity, as if they were of the highest importance. In this respect, their writings present a marked contrast to those of the apostles, and impress us that the antiquity of opinions not based on inspiration is no guarantee of their soundness. The truth is, that, at this early day, the doctrines of the apostles were greatly misapprehended, and serious errors had crept into the Church; and some of the men whose testimony we rely upon with great confidence in the question of fact, as to what the Church did and believed, contributed in no small degree to the spread and perpetuation of errors that have troubled the Church through all the time that has since elapsed. Among the first corruptions of doctrine that gained firm footing in the Church, and whose pernicious influence is felt to the present day, is one

which had immediate connection with the subject before us—the baptism of infants. The design of baptism was misinterpreted, and its symbolical character nearly lost. Instead of being understood, as originally, to be an emblematical washing away of sins, it was taken as a real washing away of sins; and, of course, from being the sign of regeneration, it was taken for regeneration itself. In this way, the language of Christ and the apostles was misapplied, and baptismal regeneration well-nigh overspread the Church. Possibly, many in that day retained in their thoughts of baptism the inward grace and the outward sign, under the distinctive name of the ordinance, as was so largely the case with the English divines of the last century; but certain it is that in popular use and popular thought baptism was the "new birth," the "remission of sins," the "sanctification;" and, following this corruption of the doctrine, abuses in connection with the administration of baptism were rapidly multiplied. The ordinance assumed an importance never given it before, and a disposition manifested itself to gather around it an air of mystery, and to

invest it with greater interest by making its administration more pompous, so as to compete with the imposing ceremonies of the pagan temples. The idea was advanced that the Spirit of God brooded over the water and breathed upon it a life-giving energy, so that real virtue proceeded therefrom; and no sooner was the water thus invested than men reasoned with themselves, that, if a little water was good, more was better, and then effusion gave place to immersion; and then they reasoned that the body should be washed, and not the clothing, and then the clothing was removed, and the body immersed *in puris naturalibus*. Then came also the use of salt and the chrism, the sign of the cross, the blowing in the ear, and baptismal robes and flowers, and all the abuses of the rite which Romanists yet practice, and for which they plead this high antiquity.

The question then arises, Did not infant baptism spring up with these abuses? The opposers of the practice assert that it did; but in support of this they give us no proof, and rely upon the prevalence of other errors to justify the assumption that this was also an

error. It is a question of fact, fortunately, and the testimony of men whose opinions were often wild is good and reliable in this issue; and all the testimony proves that the practice did not originate along with these abuses, nor in any wise grow out of the errors of doctrine that prevailed. The arguments of all those early writers recognize the universality of the practice, and show that, so far from regarding it as an innovation to be defended on the ground that infants needed washing from sin, they regarded it as sufficiently well established to become the ground of argument in favor of doctrines which were not so generally accepted. Many of them believed that infant baptism was intended to wash away native pollution; for they so asserted in explanation of it as a divine appointment; and they appealed to the practice, and its divine authorization, in proof of the doctrine of inherited depravity. If the doctrine of infant depravity had been universal in the Church, and undisputed, and if these writers had made appeal to this doctrine in justification of the practice, there might be some reasonableness in the conjecture that

infant baptism grew out of this doctrine. But the facts are all the reverse of this. The doctrine of original sin, and hereditary depravity, should not be classed with the errors of those days. The speculations of these writers, concerning the removal of native pollution, do not invalidate the main thoughts which they derived from the inspired writings.. The truth is that the apostolic doctrine of the fall and corruption of human nature in Adam was now disputed by many, and in maintaining their ground, if there had been any reason for it, those who denied depravity would have called in question the practice of baptizing infants, for it was plainly to their interest in the discussion to do so; but not one of them did it. They had the fact pressed upon their attention, as an argument against them; and there is not the slightest doubt that they would have denied the authority for the practice, if they could have found any reason for the denial. They were not lacking in courage or shrewdness, and nothing could have restrained them from retorting upon their antagonists that the practice they alleged in justification of their

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doctrine was itself an innovation, if they could have persuaded themselves that it was lacking in the essential of divine authority. We do not, therefore, argue the universality of this practice from the mere absence of recorded opposition; but we have the stronger and more positive ground for our faith, in the fact that the subject was involved in such disputations as would have brought out opposition naturally and logically; that one party appealed to it as an argument in favor of a doctrine which the other party denied; and that all parties admitted the practice, and no one questioned the authority for it. With this condition of things, there can be no doubt that, at that early day, the whole Church believed it to have come down from the apostles.

Then, the only question remaining has reference to the opportunities which the writers of those times had for knowing whence the practice came, and the possibility of their being deceived. In other words, Could this practice have been brought into the Church as an innovation, after the death of the apostles, and obtain such universal acceptance,

without disturbance or dispute, that the most learned men of the times—men of intelligence sufficient to cope with the keenest skepticism—could not trace its origin, and did not suspect its want of apostolical authority? It is useless, it seems to me, to claim that such men as Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, Pelagius, Chrysostom, Augustine, and the whole body of Christian Fathers, were lacking in intelligence or mental activity, so as to be liable to be imposed upon in a matter of this kind. That some of them erred in doctrine, as good and wise men do yet, is not to be disputed. We claim nothing on the authority of their opinions. It is one of the mistakes of Rome to attach unbecoming importance to what these men thought and said in the field of polemic and speculative divinity. The only claim we make in their behalf is, that they were intelligent and honest men, and reliable witnesses in any question of fact with which they were conversant. Their speculations did not destroy their integrity, and can not invalidate their testimony upon the question before us. We accept their testimony as to what the

Church did and believed in their day, and leave their speculations to stand or fall upon their own merits.

I now direct attention to the testimony of earlier witnesses, tracing infant baptism back to the very age of the apostles. Irenæus, who was educated in Asia, and was afterward Bishop of Lyons, gives testimony of singular significance. He was born about the time that the apostle John died, and lived to be an old man, occupying his office A. D. 178, so that his writings date back to within seventy years of the death of the last of the apostles. His facilities were excellent in early life for learning the opinions and practices of the apostles; for he was in the habit of hearing Polycarp, the friend and companion of John, who was by that apostle appointed in charge of the Church in Smyrna. Irenæus gives the following account of his early friend and teacher, Polycarp: "I remember the things that were done then better than I do those of later times, so that I could describe the place where he sat, and his going out and coming in; his manner of life, his features, his discourse to the people concerning the

conversation he had had with John and others that had seen the Lord: how he rehearsed their discourses, and what he had heard them that were eye-witnesses of the Word of Life say of our Lord, and of his miracles and doctrine: all agreeable to the Scriptures."

I cite this to show the proximity of this witness to the apostles; and also to show the reverent feelings with which he cherished the memory of his friend, who had seen and conversed with those who had seen Christ on earth. It indicates clearly that he had it in his power to know whether infant baptism had come in as an innovation or not.

Irenæus, speaking of Christ, says: "For he came to save all persons by himself; all, I say, who by him are regenerated to God; infants, and little ones, and youth, and elder persons." The pertinency and force of this language is in the use of the word "regenerate." It is necessary to bear in mind that all these early writers spoke of "regeneration" in such a way as to include baptism. If they did not use regeneration as exactly synonymous with baptism, they made it include the outward rite; and there is more

probability that in their conceptions of the thing they excluded the inward grace than that they excluded the external ceremony. Baptism was so fixed in their minds as regeneration, that they spoke of regeneration as baptism. To what extent they still implied and understood the inward grace, as connected with the rite, we can not determine; but it is certain that when this "Father" spoke of "infants," "little ones," "youths," and "elder persons," as being "regenerated to God," he meant that all these classes were baptized. His additional remark, that Christ sanctified all these stages of human life by himself passing through them, by no means interferes with the sense of the word "regenerate," then so fully established by usage. We see from his own words, in another place, that he used "regenerate" to include baptism. He says: "And again, when he gave his disciples the commission of regenerating unto God, he said unto them, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' where the commission of regenerating plainly means

the commission of baptizing." (See Wall's "Hist. Infant Baptism.")

This proves beyond doubt that Irenæus spoke of infant baptism; and I believe that no historian has doubted the fact. Neander admits the fact, though he gathers from Irenæus's words that he rather justified it by principles drawn from a profound Christian consciousness than from the authority of the apostles; but a little reflection on his reference to the commission will show that he understood that commission, to "regenerate to God by baptism," to apply to all the classes named. We are not concerned about his method of justifying it, by appeals to Christian consciousness or otherwise; it is the fact that the practice prevailed in his day, and without opposition, that is most pertinent to our argument. This is the pregnant fact, that this Christian Father, who lived in the lingering light of the apostolic age, whose ear caught the echo of apostolic preaching, and who cherished so affectionately the memory of one who had been the contemporary and friend of the beloved disciple, and others who had seen the Lord—that this man, whose

early training was by those who clasped hands with the apostles, believed in infant baptism, and believed it enjoined in the commission to "disciple the nations, baptizing them." That such testimony would pass unchallenged could not be expected. It could not be otherwise than that it should be subjected to the most rigid scrutiny, and much labor has been bestowed upon it, with a view to weaken its force; but the result of the most learned criticism is to leave it just where I have placed it—not as justifying the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration," but as vindicating the position that Irenæus so used the phrase, "regenerated unto God," as to include baptism, and thereby recognize the baptism of "infants, little ones, youths, and elder persons." There is absolutely no other sense in which, at his day, one could speak of regenerating infants unto God.

I submit the testimony of one more witness. Justin Martyr was a learned Samaritan, converted about A. D. 133, and wrote about forty years after the apostle John died. He was doubtless born and educated while that apostle was yet on earth. He probably con-

versed with many who had distinct recollection of apostolic times; so that he too stood in the twilight of the day which was made glorious by the inspiration and zeal of men who had seen and heard the Lord. Justin says, "Many persons among us, of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were discipled to Christ in their childhood, do continue uncorrupted." The allusion to baptism is in the phrase, "discipled to Christ." The word "discipled" is the same that occurs in the commission to "disciple the nations, baptizing them." It is *mathetcusate*, and means to make disciples, though we have it rendered teach. The manner of making disciples is by baptizing them. This is the meaning attached to the word by the apostles, and by all the post-apostolic Fathers. It is in the strictest harmony with this interpretation of the commission, and this use of *matheteuo*, that Justin speaks of persons being "discipled to Christ," meaning, by baptism. In the light of all the facts in the case, it is not possible to understand the words of Justin in any other sense. It is certain that persons could not be "discipled" without baptism;

hence, when he says they were "discipled to Christ," the testimony is just as positive as if he had said they were baptized in childhood. And if this is correct, as it unquestionably is, then Justin testifies that many were yet living, sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were discipled by being baptized in childhood; and, as he wrote only about forty years after the death of John, these persons yet living must have been baptized in childhood, at least twenty years before John, the last of the apostles, left the world. Here, then, unless this chain can be broken, is a record of infant baptism in the Church, that reaches back to apostolic times. And can this chain be broken? I verily believe not. It has been hammered severely; but up to this time it has withstood the stalwart blows of the giants of criticism, and remains complete, without a missing link!

The word for child—*paidion*—is the same that is used in the Scriptures of little children, too young to act for themselves, and occurs sometimes interchangeably with *brephos*—infants. Its real meaning is as given, little children, too young to act for them-

selves; and therefore it is properly used of infants.

But the notions of Justin respecting baptism are seen in the fact that he makes it correspond with circumcision. He calls it the "spiritual circumcision." He says: "We also, who by him have had access to God, have not received the carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision, which Enoch, and those like him, observed. And we have received it by baptism, by the mercy of God, because we were sinners; and it is enjoined upon all persons to receive it in the same way." Now, the pertinency of this is seen, when it is considered that Justin was conducting a dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, and was justifying the Christians in neglecting to circumcise their children. This neglect was a grievous fault, in the estimation of the Jew; and Justin shows that baptism is the "spiritual circumcision," and answers in the place of the "carnal circumcision;" but how this could meet the objection of the Jew, if the spiritual circumcision was disallowed to infants, it is impossible to see. In blending baptism and circumcision, as to their spiritual

import, so as to show the identity of their meaning, Justin was but following the example of Paul, and probably had his words in mind. Upon the whole, the proof that Justin recognized infant baptism, both in his reference to "spiritual circumcision," and in the phrase, "discipled to Christ in childhood," is too clear to admit of the slightest impeachment.

Here, then, we close the argument. By incontestable proof, we trace infant baptism to the times when men lived who had seen the apostles. We find no period in all the history of the Church when it did not exist. The wisest and most learned men of those earliest days affirm that it came from the apostles. The apostolic record of household baptisms favors the supposition that it did. In a word, the chain of testimony, from Scripture and history, is too strong to be broken, since nothing better than conjecture can be brought against it. Let the different lines of argument now submitted, each measurably independent of the other, all be brought together, and let their separate rays be concentrated into a focus, and the light

of truth will speedily drive away the "shad ows, clouds, and darkness," under which so many grope, while honestly seeking the path of duty in relation to this divine appointment.

Discourse VI.

THE NATURE OF THE WORD BAPTIZE.

"Of the doctrine of baptisms."—Heb. vi, 2.

IN considering the mode of baptism, the first thing necessary is to bring before our minds the exact issue to be discussed. There can be no really profitable investigation of the subject without this.

It is known that, as a Church, we practice three modes of administering the rite; namely, pouring, sprinkling, and immersion. Why, then, should we discuss the question of mode at all, seeing that we acknowledge the validity of baptism administered by either or all the modes? Upon this subject, as well as that of the subjects of baptism, we stand on the defensive. Our practice is called in question by those who are more exclusive than ourselves, and we find ourselves very bitterly assailed for our liberality. Our baptisms

by pouring and sprinkling are denounced as no baptisms, and our resort to immersion is ridiculed as a weakness and a concession. Of course, we do not accept the representations of other parties in matters of this kind, and propose to show that our whole practice is defensible on the solid ground of Scripture, and that our acceptance of immersion as an allowable mode of baptism is consistent with all our teachings, and implies nothing of indifferentism or concession. We make no war on the validity of baptism by immersion; but against the assumption that immersion is definitely prescribed in the Scriptures, and is the only baptism, we enter our solemn protest.

It is evident that very much, in this controversy, depends on the word *baptize;* and an investigation of the nature and meaning of that word is the duty of this hour. There is much that might be said in regard to the origin, use, and meaning of this word, in which all parties substantially agree; but all that may be rightfully eliminated from our present discussion, as we have time and occasion only to deal with such aspects as are necessary to a right conclusion. I must remark,

however, that the issue is not as our opponents usually put it. It is not unusual with them to insist that baptize must mean immerse or pour or sprinkle, and to proceed on the supposition that, in advocating effusion, we are aiming to prove that it does mean specifically pour or sprinkle. This representation of the case is extremely incorrect, and fails utterly to indicate our position; and, of course, it can not possibly present the real issue. We do not believe that the word in question means specifically pour or sprinkle, any more than we believe it means immerse. We hold that the Greek verb *baptizo*, and the nouns *baptismos* and *baptisma*, are used in too broad a sense, in the Scriptures, to be translated by any specific terms in our language that simply express mode. Our translators, in giving us the standard version, did exactly right in transferring these words to our language, with suitable terminations to make them legitimate English words. They found in our language no equivalents for them, in their judgment, and therefore did the only right thing; and we most cordially approve their action. The only thing to be

regretted is that they did not invariably transfer the words, as they always did when allusion was had to the ordinance of the Church. We do not believe *baptizo* ought to be translated pour or sprinkle or immerse in any instance, as it is not; and the few places where it is translated "wash" would be better presented to the English reader if no translation had been attempted. As a class, effusionists are well contented with the authorized version, and have never sought a new translation on sectarian grounds.

The real question is, not as to whether *baptizo* means immerse or pour or sprinkle, but whether it is a *specific* or a *generic* term. We must ascertain this point before we can determine whether it expresses the manner of using the water in administering the rite, or simply expresses the act of administration, without determining the mode. If I show that the word is *generic*—that it relates to the administration of the ordinance by the use of water, without prescribing the mode—I shall have gained my point. My position is that the mode is to be learned outside of the word that expresses the administration,

and outside of the corresponding noun which is the name of the ordinance. We must look at the practices which gave rise to the use of this word, to the surroundings of the parties administering the rite, and to its religious meaning and symbolic import, and from these sources gather light as to the manner of baptizing.

With these general remarks, I come directly to the question, Is *baptize* a specific or a generic term? What is its real character? Does it, or does it not, definitely express the mode of using the water? I take the ground that it is *generic*, and, of course, must prove it. Mr. Carson, who is perhaps the ablest critic who has written on this subject in the interest of immersionism, and is generally recognized as a standard authority in all the Churches where exclusive immersion prevails, tells us that the word is "strictly univocal." I mention this author because of his high standing and acknowledged ability, and for the purpose of having before us an authoritative representation of the other side. Now, a word that is "strictly univocal" is a word of one meaning; and it ought to be so well

defined that there could be no possible ground for controversy concerning it. Its first meaning is its last and only meaning, and all discussion about primary and secondary meanings is excluded. But, notwithstanding the learned criticisms of the distinguished writer named, and his vigorous grappling with the stubborn facts which he encountered, my best judgment compels me to hold that, if this word is "strictly univocal," the lexicons, which give it several meanings, are wrong, the Bible use is wrong, and classic use is wrong; for, in all these, there are different meanings attached to it. A *generic* word is one which comprehends a genus or kind; and there are many generic words in common use, whose character, in this respect, we never stop to consider. I say, for instance, that I recently *rode* from New York to Philadelphia. I convey a very definite idea in reference to the fact of passing from one city to another; and yet the word *rode* is generic. It tells the general fact, but tells nothing as to the mode of riding. I might have ridden in the cars or on a boat or in a buggy or on horseback. In

either case, the word properly expresses the idea intended. The remark is made in your hearing, "A man was *killed* yesterday." A very serious fact is thus clearly stated; but the manner of the killing is not indicated. He might have been shot or stabbed or drowned or poisoned; and, in either case, he was killed. This, then, is a generic word, which expresses a thing done, without expressing the way of doing it. *Wet* is a generic word, and so is *wash*, because the wetting and the washing can be done in different ways. The specific term that would express the mode of the action may be included or implied in the generic; but it is not and can not be an equivalent for it, because it does not exhaust its meaning. The generic *baptize* may imply the specific pour, sprinkle, or immerse; but neither of these words, nor all of them together, can be taken as an equivalent for *baptize*, for the reason that they do not exhaust the meaning of *baptize*. There is still a religious idea, a consecration to a holy service, that no specific term expressive of mode can convey; and, on this account, we would not have the word murdered by any partial trans-

lation. According to the assumption of immersionists, the word immerse is the equivalent of baptize; but, if so, the naked fact of sinking under water exhausts its meaning, and whatever besides this abstract idea is necessary to the ordinance is not expressed, and can not be expressed, by the word baptize.

But how shall we determine the character and meaning of the word before us? To what shall we appeal as authority in the case? To the lexicons, of course, says one. Well, lexicons are useful; but are they ultimate authority? Let us think a little. I would not ignore the judgment of learned men, and therefore inquire what some of high repute have said touching the value of lexicons in this discussion. The late Alexander Campbell, whose learning has never been questioned, says, "No learned man will ever rest his faith upon dictionaries." Again, he says: "I say the dictionaries are sometimes wrong, and that I can prove. So say all philologists and critics of eminence. The lexicons frequently contradict each other on various points." (Debate with Rice, pp. 96, 106.) Mr. Carson takes similar ground. In his

chapter on the burden of proof, in speaking of a definition which Dr. Johnson gives of the word "paradox," Mr. Carson says, "It is given merely on the authority of etymology, which is no authority at all. Mere contrariety to the prevailing opinion is not a paradox, in the sense of the English language." Here, then, is proof of the need of caution in using lexicons as authority. If Dr. Johnson was betrayed into an inaccuracy by simply following the light of etymology, what may we not fear in following lexicographers of dead or foreign languages? The truth is, the lexicons are but the echo of usage as understood and interpreted by the lexicographer. Our appeal ought, therefore, to be not to the lexicons, but to usage. Nothing but examples from actual usage can be ultimate authority in determining the meaning of words in any language. And I am happy in being sustained in this position by the distinguished immersionist critic, Mr. Carson. He says: "Language has no logical truth for its standard; and therefore against this it can not trespass. Use is the sole arbiter of language; and whatever is agree-

able to this authority stands justified beyond impeachment." Then, passing the lexicons, not as useless, but as of only secondary importance, I appeal to usage—to the Bible use of this word.

The word *baptizo* is derived from *bapto;* and it is not claimed by any one that there is any difference between the two words, so far as mode is concerned. We shall, therefore, be in the direct line of the argument while considering passages containing either word. In citing passages from the Old Testament, the Septuagint is referred to, which is just as valuable as the New Testament, so far as illustrating the use of words is concerned. I begin by giving a few quotations where *bapto* occurs with such surroundings that it can not possibly mean immerse. I refer to Leviticus xiv, 2–7: "This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest, and the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper, then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean,

and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop; and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field." In this passage, *bapto* is rendered dip; but it can not be understood in the sense of immerse. Nor would it do to translate it immerse; for the living bird, the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop, could not all be immersed in the blood of the bird that was killed. There was a physical impossibility in the way. But the immersionist replies that the blood of the slain bird was caught in a vessel containing running or living water, in which mixture the living bird and the other things were immersed. The answer is, the "mixture" is all in the ideas of the critic; for there is no mixture described in the passage. The bird

was to be killed in a vessel *over running water;* but that the water was in the vessel, so as to mix with the blood, is the purest conjecture. The dipping was for the purpose of smearing, preparatory to sprinkling upon the person to be cleansed. This meaning of the word is justified here, and in many other places, both in sacred and classical writings, as we shall see.

The story of the strange punishment of Nebuchadnezzar is familiar to Bible readers. I read Daniel iv, 33: "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body *was wet with the dew of heaven,* till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." The word translated "wet" is *bapto,* and bears the general sense of moisten, but does not and can not admit of the idea of an immersion. The wetting was not effected by dipping or plunging. The dew of heaven fell gently, and wet his body. This is all. No learning or ingenuity can extort from *bapto* the meaning of immerse, in this instance. Critics in that interest have bestowed a vast

amount of labor on this passage, trying to remove it out of their way; but there it stands, an everlasting contradiction to the assertion that *bapto* is a specific word, meaning only immerse.

In Revelation xix, 13, we find *bapto* in a highly figurative description of the Son of God, as a conquering warrior, triumphing over his enemies, clothed in a "vesture dipped (*bebammenon*) in blood." The imagery is evidently taken from the prophet Isaiah's description of the same personage, in the same character. I read the prophet's description, Isaiah lxiii, 1–4: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; *and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments*, and I will *stain* all my raiment. For the day of vengeance

is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." The idea in both passages is the same. It is that of a warrior staining his raiment in the blood of his enemies. The vesture "dipped" in Revelation is the garment stained in Isaiah; and, while *bapto* expresses the idea of stain, without regard to mode, the condition of the scene, as well as the positive language of the prophet, indicates that the vesture is to be understood as *stained*, or dyed, by the sprinkling of the blood. Immersion is out of the question. So, in the expression, "Give a sop when I have *dipped* it," the idea is not that of an immersion, but *smearing*. (See John xiii, 26.) So, also, in Matthew xxvi, 23: "He that *dippeth* his hand with me in the dish" does not mean immerse his hand; for it was not customary to immerse the hand in the dish from which food was being taken at the table. In all these places *bapto* bears the general meaning of wet, dye, stain, moisten, smear, and that without expressing the mode.

Now, before tracing the Bible use of this word further, I wish to look outside of the Scriptures for a little time. Much is said in

this general controversy about the primary and the secondary meaning of the word—about its literal, metaphorical, and consequential meanings; but it is not possible, in these discourses, to enter critically into this department of investigation, nor is it necessary. I am not so much concerned about the primary meaning as the proper meaning at the time the Savior spoke and the New Testament was written. It is well known that the first meaning of words does not always remain their proper meaning. Much of the labor of the philologist consists in tracing the history of words and marking the modifications of their meaning. It is by no means uncommon for the secondary meaning to take the place of the primary as the proper and literal meaning; but upon this point I wish to read the language of the learned immersionist critic whom I have already named, Mr. Carson. He is speaking of this same word *bapto*, and says: "Now, while I contend that dyeing is the secondary meaning of this word, I contend also that this is a real literal meaning, independent of consequence. Although this meaning arose

from the dyeing by dipping, yet the word has come, by appropriation, to denote dyeing without reference to mode. . . . That *bapto* signifies to dye, in any manner, is a truth which, instead of being against us, serves to solve difficulties that have been very clumsily got over by some of the ablest writers on this side of the question. . . . Nothing in the history of words is more common than to enlarge or diminish their meaning. Ideas not originally included in them are often affixed to some words, while others drop ideas originally asserted in their application. In this way, *bapto*, from signifying mere mode, came to be applied to a certain operation usually performed in that mode. From signifying dip, it came to signify to dye by dipping, because this was the way in which things were usually dyed; and afterward, from dyeing by dipping, it came to denote *dyeing in any manner*. A like process might be shown in the history of a thousand words." Mr. Carson thus frankly gives his opinion of this word *bapto*, and proceeds to support it by adducing examples from the classics, which, without his designing it, prove

beyond successful contradiction, that *bapto* is, as we contend, a *generic term.* Among other examples, he gives the following: "The only instance in which I have observed the word *bapto* in this signification is in the works of Hippocrates. He employs it to denote dyeing by *dropping* the dyeing liquid on the thing dyed: 'When it drops upon the garments they are *dyed.*' This, surely, is not dyeing by dipping." Then, after presenting several examples from other writers, proving the same point, Mr. Carson comments on them thus: "These examples are sufficient to prove that the word *bapto* signifies to dye *in general,* though originally, and still usually, applied to dyeing by dipping. Having such evidence before my eyes, I could not deny this to my opponents, even were it a difficulty as to the subject of the mode of baptism." (See Carson on "Mode of Baptism," Chap. ii, Sec. 6.)

Now, before reading further from this learned defender of immersion, whose name is justly celebrated in all anti-Pedobaptist Churches, I wish to note six propositions, which are fairly deducible from his statements. They are the following: 1. That

dyeing is a real meaning of *bapto*, independent of consequence. 2. "*Bapto* has come, by appropriation, to denote *dyeing*, without reference to mode." 3. "From dyeing by dipping, it came to denote dyeing in any manner." 4. The examples adduced are "sufficient to prove that the word *bapto* signifies to dye in general." 5. "Nothing, in the history of words, is more common than to enlarge or diminish their meaning." 6. A word "may come to enlarge its meanings so as to lose sight of its origin." In the light of these propositions, made not from desire, but from the force of evidence which an honest critic found himself unable to resist, I submit that *bapto* is not a specific word, relating only to mode, but a generic term. The question is not as to its origin or first meaning, but as to its real character and proper meaning, as determined by its use in the classics and in the Scriptures.

In view of the importance of this matter, and in order to finish it up, so far as these discourses are concerned, I read again from Mr. Carson. After charging some of his Baptist brethren with straining matters, and

employing false criticism, in their endeavors to prove that when *bapto* relates to dyeing it is always to dyeing by dipping, he says: "The observations of Dr. Gale on this subject fall in some degree under the above censure. 'The Grecians,' says he, 'very frequently apply the word in all its various forms to the dyer's art, sometimes perhaps not very properly, but always so as to imply and refer only to its true natural signification, *to dip*.' What does this learned writer mean when he expresses a doubt of the propriety of this usage? Does he mean that such an extension of the meaning of words is in some degree a trespass against the laws of language? But such a usage is in strict accordance with the laws of language; and the history of a thousand words sanctions this example. Language has no logical truth for its standard, and therefore against this it can not trespass. Use is the sole arbiter of language; and whatever is agreeable to this authority stands justified beyond impeachment. *Candlestick* is as properly applied to gold as to timber; *bapto* signifies to *dye by sprinkling*, as properly as by dipping, though

originally it was confined to the latter. Nor is he well founded when he asserts that the word, in such applications, always implies and refers to its primary signification only. On the contrary, I have produced some examples, and he himself has produced others, in which candor can not say that there is any such implication or reference. From such examples, it could not be known even that *bapto* has the meaning of *dip*. They relate to dyeing, *wholly without reference to dipping;* nay, some of them with an expressed reference to another mode. This is a fact, and, were it even against me, I could not but admit it. Nor are such applications of the word to be accounted for by metaphor, as Dr. Gale asserts. *They are as literal as a primary meaning.* It is by extension of literal meaning, and not by figure of any kind, that words come to depart so far from their original signification. The examples of this kind which Dr. Gale produces can not be accounted for by his philosophy. 'Magnes, an old comic poet of Athens, used the Lydian music, shaved his face, and *smeared* it over with tawny ashes.' Now, surely, *baptomenos*

here has no reference to its primary meaning. Nor is it used figuratively. The face of the person was rubbed with the ashes. By any thing implied or referred to in this example, it could not be known that *bapto* ever signifies *to dip*."

So much for the candor of Mr. Carson. His intelligence and learning recoiled at the "clumsy" method of his brethren, in getting over the difficulties they encountered in the classical use of this word; and, seeing their "straining" and "false criticism," and their manifest failures, he made a most vigorous effort to redeem the cause. He succeeded in gaining an enviable reputation as a learned critic; but his less "clumsy" and more refined methods would not remove the difficulties. He proved that *bapto* is a generic term, although he did not admit the fact in so many words. I take what he established, and allow his speculations, and his strugglings with insuperable difficulties, to pass; accepting this high authority as superseding the necessity of a search into the classical use of the word that would be unsuited to the public congregation.

As *baptizo* is a derivative of *bapto*, it can not be more specific. I now give a few examples of its use. The first one is from the Apocrypha, and is intended simply as an illustration. I read from Ecclesiasticus xxxiv, 25: "He that washeth himself from a dead body, and toucheth it again, what availeth his washing?" Here are two words rendered "wash" in the same verse. The first one is *baptizo*, the last is *louo*. The last is unquestionably generic; and the first can not be more specific, but bears the same general sense. But this is not the argument. The question is, What is meant by the sentence, "He that washeth [*baptizeth*] himself from a dead body?" It is an allusion to the requirement of the law of Moses in regard to the purification of persons who might contract uncleanness by touching the body of a dead person. The law pronounced such unclean until they were purified by having the water of separation sprinkled upon them. This identical purification is expressed by the use of the word *baptizo*. The law is in Numbers xix, 17–19: "And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt

heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even." Now, it is evident that in this ceremony the real purification was in the sprinkling of the water by the clean person upon the unclean. Hence the reason, assigned in the thirteenth verse, why the unclean person that refused to be purified should be cut off from Israel: "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: *because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him,* he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him." Nothing could take the place of the sprink-

ling of the water by the clean upon the unclean. This was the great fact in the divinely appointed service; and yet this ceremonial washing, as a whole, is expressed in the place before us by *baptizo*. "He that *baptizeth* himself from a dead body." The real baptizing was the sprinkling. The subsequent washing of his clothes and bathing of his flesh was required; and yet it was not the purification, nor is there any probability that even this required an immersion. Considering the situation of the Israelites in the wilderness, where the crowd was so great and facilities for immersion were so scarce, it is almost a certainty that both the washing and the bathing were without immersion, especially since no word in the whole account demands that sense; but, to say the very least of the case, here is a baptism in which sprinkling was the chief part.

Perhaps the earliest event, in the history of God's ancient people, that is mentioned as a baptism at a later day, is the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites. Something took place, in connection with that event, which Paul calls a baptism. I refer to 1 Corinthi-

ans x, 1, 2: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The plain facts here are all I want. These are: 1. There was a baptism — they "were all baptized." 2. The baptism took place while the Israelites were crossing the sea. 3. The cloud was employed as an instrument of the baptism. Now, the question is, How were they baptized? Our opponents have a theory—they must have. It is that the water of the sea stood in walls on either side, and that the cloud came down and covered them over, forming a tunnel, so that they were immersed. This makes a sorry baptism *unto Moses*, if nothing more was meant. But this tunnel arrangement is not satisfactory. They were baptized in the sea; and yet they passed over "dry-shod" and "on dry ground," according to the record; and but few have any faith in immersions on dry ground! The cloud was the instrument of the baptism: and we learn elsewhere what the cloud did. This passage through the Red

Sea is celebrated in sacred song, in the seventy-seventh Psalm, where we read the following: "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid; the depths also were troubled. The *clouds poured out water;* the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron." But for this, we might not have known that there was any other storm that night than the strong east wind, but nothing now seems more natural; and, but for what the apostle says, we should not have known that there was any baptism. The fact, however, is none the less certain because it was not mentioned before; nor can there be any doubt that the cloud furnished the water, and baptized the people by pouring it upon them.

The prophet Elijah caused something to be done, which the learned Greek Father in the Church, whose vernacular was the Greek

of the New Testament, the celebrated Origen, spoke of as a baptism, using this same *baptizo*. You remember Elijah's contest, on Mount Carmel, with the prophets of Baal, when he proposed that they should build an altar, and place wood upon it, and cut a bullock in pieces and lay upon the wood, and call upon their god, and that he would do the same, and the God that answered by fire should be acknowledged the true God. The challenge was accepted; the altars were prepared, and the bullocks slain. The prophets of Baal called upon Baal, but got no answer. Elijah stood by, and, with some irony, told them to call aloud; that he was asleep, or gone away, and they should awake him, or in some way gain his attention; but they were compelled to give it up. Then he called them to him, and he made ready his altar, and the wood, and the bullock; but, before he prayed for the fire, he directed his servants to pour four barrels of water on the wood. This was repeated three times. Barrels were not known then as we know them now. The barrels were pails or jars, such as the ancients used in carrying water. Twelve

vessels of water were poured upon the wood, in three successive pourings. Then, when Elijah prayed, the fire fell from heaven, and consumed the offering. Now, Origen describes this, and calls the use of the water, which was poured upon the wood, baptizing the wood. Hear him: "How came you to think that Elias, when he should come, would baptize, who did not, in Ahab's time, baptize the wood upon the altar, which was to be washed before it was burnt, by the Lord's appearing in fire? But he ordered the priests to do that; not once only, but he says, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time: and, Do it the third time; and they did it the third time. He, therefore, that did not himself baptize then, but assigned that work to others, how was he likely to baptize, when he, according to Malachi's prophecy, should come?" (Wall's "History of Infant Baptism.") The Greek word that would have expressed the mode of using the water would not express all the writer wished to express. He regarded the washing as a religious act, a consecration; and therefore he used the *generic* term, *baptizo*, for the purpose,

and that in full view of the fact that the washing was by pouring. This example of the *use of the word* by this learned Christian father, whose native tongue was the Greek, ought forever to silence all cavilers, and put to rest all doubts as to the generic character of this word. The wood upon the altar was *baptized* when the water was *poured* upon it.

I now come to the daily baptisms which the Jews performed, and which familiarized them with the word, so that when the ordinance was instituted no explanations were needed. I read from Mark vii, 2–5: "And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with

unwashen hands?" Here we have the verb and the noun rendered "wash" and "washing," where baptize and baptism would have been literal. The unwashen hands were unbaptized hands. The word rendered "tables" means couches or beds; and most likely the reference is to the large couches on which the Jews reclined during meals. The question is, How were these baptisms performed? I submit the following points: 1. The couches, tables, or beds could not be immersed without great inconvenience, and much more labor than is intimated. 2. The frequency of these baptisms affords strong presumptive proof that they were not by immersion. They occurred on returning from market, and before eating. The conveniences for immersion, and the necessary changes of raiment, would not always be at hand. 3. The water-pots used by the Jews, such as are mentioned in John ii, 6, which were "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece," in all probability furnished the water, which, by means of these vessels, was kept in readiness, and were not of the capacity to admit of immersions of men, tables, or

couches. 4. These were religious baptisms, and therefore immersion was not necessary to meet their design, which was a ceremonial cleansing. The Jews thought themselves liable to come in contact, while in the markets, with Gentiles or other unclean persons, and thereby contract uncleanness in the religious sense. To guard themselves against continuing in any uncleanness thus contracted, they adopted the practice of baptizing themselves whenever they returned from market or places of exposure, and before eating. These ceremonial washings, called baptisms, were not required to be immersions, neither by any known law or tradition, nor by the end to be obtained. They were not, strictly speaking, the purifications enjoined by the law of Moses, such as the washing from a dead body and the like; but they were undoubtedly of similar character; and, though performed with pure water, or water not mixed with the ashes of the burnt-offering, there is no shadow of ground for supposing the water was not applied in the same way—that is, by sprinkling.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses the phrase *diaphorois baptismois* ("divers

baptisms") in such a way as certainly to include sprinkling in *baptismos*, if not to mean sprinkling and that alone. I refer to Hebrews ix, 10: "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings [*diaphorois baptismois*], and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." The "washings," or baptisms, were divers—that is, many and of different kinds. They were to be observed on different occasions, as rendered necessary by different causes. The allusion is to all the washings enjoined in the law of Moses. These, after the return of the Jews from Babylon, came to be called baptisms; hence the name of the washings of the hands, cups, pots, and tables, just noticed. How were the numerous washings and purifications under the law to be performed? Not one of all these was required to be done by immersion, while some of them are known to have been by sprinkling. In every instance where the manner of using the water is prescribed, it is by sprinkling; and in all the others, where the mode is not prescribed, the action is expressed by a generic word properly rendered "wash," but

never immerse. This, I claim, settles the question to the extent that *baptizo*, as well as *bapto*, is a generic term. This is all I now seek to establish; for, this gained, and the whole argument is ours. Those who imagine that it must mean immerse, or else pour or sprinkle, mistake the whole issue; and we do not wonder they never rise to a clear survey of the broad ground on which we stand, and on which we admit the validity of baptisms by either mode.

Discourse VII.

NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISMS.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized."—Acts II, 41.

HAVING seen, in the preceding discourse, the nature of the word in this discussion, I now propose a rapid survey of the baptisms recorded in the New Testament, so far as they shed any light on the question of mode.

The first is the *Baptism of John.* The record is brief, and begins so abruptly as to imply that the people were familiar with the rite before the Baptist began his ministry. John was loyal to the Levitical law, and entertained no thought of setting up an establishment of his own, in opposition to the institutions received by the people as of divine authority. All he did, therefore, was proper to be done under the law of Moses. The

legal washings of the Jews had long been known as baptisms. But he went to the Jews as a prophet of God, anointed to a particular work, as a reformer of his nation. Impelled by the Spirit within him, he went forth to call the people to repentance, and thus to prepare the way for the expected Messiah's advent. His was a "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." It was not Christian baptism; for that was not yet instituted. Jesus of Nazareth had not yet performed any official act. Those who received John's baptism, and afterward became disciples of Christ, were baptized again. But the nature of this special work is not before us, and we must pass it.

The argument in favor of immersion, from the account we have of John's baptism, is all drawn from the locality of his ministration, with one or two incidental expressions. He baptized in the river Jordan; and he baptized in Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water there; and some that were baptized in the river "went down into the water, and came up out of the water." These brief sentences comprise the whole

argument for immersion, so far as this record is concerned. Can we reasonably account for all these expressions, independently of the manner of administering the rite? If we can, immersion is not necessary to an understanding of all that is written.

Why did John go to the river to baptize? It is not certain that he began there. Mark says, "John did baptize in the wilderness." He also baptized "beyond Jordan." This, however, was at Bethabara, and might have been in Jordan; and so there is a possibility that the baptisms "in the wilderness" might have been in the river; but this is not certain, nor is it important. The truth is that, shortly after John opened his ministry, a great excitement was created, and the news went abroad that a great prophet had risen in Israel. The people then came out to see and hear, and such multitudes thronged about him that he would have been compelled to resort to the river-side for the accommodation of the people, whatever the mode of his baptism, or if he had not baptized at all. A consideration of the population of Palestine at that time, and a fair construction of the record in

regard to the numbers that were baptized, will lead to the conclusion that not less than three millions of persons received the rite at his hands. His ministry lasted somewhere from seven to eight months. Deduct from this time the Sabbaths, and the time employed in preaching, and necessary for rest, refreshments, and incidental conversations, and you will readily see that it was literally impossible for him to immerse the numbers baptized in the time occupied. Besides the physical labor involved, immersion would have imposed many burdens and inconveniences, in the way of changes of clothing, and making the changes; so that we can not accept that as the mode of the baptisms, without the most positive proof.

Then, let it be borne in mind, that John began his ministry in the neighborhood of the Jordan; that the vast multitudes that gathered around him rendered resort to the river a necessity, however he baptized; and that the Jews, in all their religious washings under the law, attached great importance to living or "running water," even when the washing was enjoined by the law to be done

by sprinkling, as in case of cleansing after the leprosy, and the washing from a dead body, and many other cases, and we have a good and sufficient reason for his going to the river, without regard to his manner of baptizing. And the fact that he was baptizing Jews as a Jew, with the law binding upon him and the people, which enjoined religious washings by sprinklings, which washings the Jews now called baptisms, as we have seen, places the matter before us almost in the light of a demonstration that his baptism was by sprinkling.

But would it not take nearly as much time to baptize by sprinkling as by immersion? Not necessarily so. In the latter case, each one would be separately handled by the Baptist; but, in the other case, the recipients of the rite might go to the water in companies, while John, from his position in the "running water," with the hyssop branch in his hand, according to the custom of the Jews, ordained by the law for religious washings, could sprinkle the water upon them with great rapidity, and yet with due solemnity. Now, if this were really the mode—as the very

best authority indicates that it was—all that is said in the Scriptures of those baptized by John would be literally true, and in the best possible sense. It would be true that they were baptized in Jordan; it would be true if, in being sprinkled, they stepped into the edge of the water, that they "went down into the water, and came up out of the water;" and, more than this, it would be true that they were baptized *with* water, which can be true only when the administrator handles the water, and not the person.

And what has now been said answers the argument from the statement that "John was baptizing in Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water there." I make no argument on the phrase, *polla hudata*—many waters. Enon was not a river. Nor is there any proof in existence that there was any water-stream there large enough for immersion. That difficulty, however, could have been remedied by digging and damming, as it was a place of springs. We have seen why John must pitch his tent and do his work where there was a good supply of water, whether he baptized in one way or

another. At the time the multitude was greatest, he did his work at the river, which was a turbulent, muddy, rapid stream, while the valley was excessively hot and unhealthy. Therefore, as soon as the throng subsided, he removed from the river, where there was *more* water, to Enon, the place of springs, where there was still "much water," or "many waters," and of a better quality. He sought a place supplied with water, on the same principle that our camp-meeting people make this a requisite in selecting a place for encampment. By the force of circumstances John was holding camp-meetings, not on a small scale either, and he must be located where water was plenty.

And John baptized Jesus. So far as mode is concerned, there is no doubt that he was baptized just as others. He went down into the water. But that was not his baptism. After he went in, he was baptized. Then he came up out of the water. All this sheds no light on the mode. There is no dispute about the fact that he was baptized in the river. Many pious people lay much stress on his example. But he was not baptized as

an example for any body. He did not go to the baptism till late in John's ministry, after the multitude had been baptized. A strange way to set an example! Nor was he a fit subject for John's baptism, in its ordinary meaning. John's was a "baptism unto repentance;" but here was a just person, who needed no repentance. John's was a baptism "for the remission of sins;" but this man had no sins to be remitted. Neither could he receive Christian baptism. That was a sign of regeneration, and an emblematic washing away of sins; all out of place in this case. Nor could he be baptized in his own name. What, then, could his baptism mean? It was exceptional in every respect. John, by inspiration or intuition, saw this, and forbade him. Jesus insisted, and explained. What means his explanation, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness?" He needed no outward rite to fulfill personal righteousness. He was upright and pure. What then? He was a Jew, and John was a Jew, and in some sense this whole ministry of baptism was a Jewish rite. He and John were both under the Levitical law,

which he came to fulfill, not to destroy. The righteousness must, therefore, have been of the law. But what was there in the law that demanded this rite? Nothing that we can trace to a formal precept immediately applicable to the case. The same may be said of the whole of John's baptisms. Yet there was something in the law out of which John's baptism grew; and there was a principle in that law, interpenetrating all its precepts, and pervading all its ceremonies, that could be fulfilled in this extraordinary instance. It was that which disallowed any public religious service to be performed by any one on whom the water of separation or dedication had not been "sprinkled." It was in compliance with the spirit of the Levitical law that he deferred his ministry till he was thirty years of age; and in the same spirit, before beginning his public ministry, he sought this religious consecration by the use of "running water." How, then, was he baptized? Divest your minds of all the songs about "yielding wave" and "liquid grave," and look at the facts, and then decide.

We turn now to the first Christian baptism. It was on the day of Pentecost, when

three thousand were baptized. The record is brief, but full of instruction, if we study all the facts. The apostles preached the Gospel, and many were cut to the heart and inquired what they should do. They were told to repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and it is said that "they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Now, we are called upon, with this short account, to decide in our own minds as to probability in the case, touching the mode of the baptism of this large company. Seeing the word baptize does not indicate the mode, how was it probably done? The apostles were Jews, and so were the converts; they were all used to the religious use of water under the law, and were accustomed to the "divers baptisms" still practiced, and needed no instruction as to what baptism was, or how it was performed. But, as we have seen, the most, if not all these familiar baptisms, were by sprinkling; and there is absolutely no proof in existence that any of them were by immersion. The converts

would, therefore, most naturally expect baptism by sprinkling. But, if not, how much time was there for immersing the multitude? Surely, none of them came expecting it, so as to be prepared with changes of clothing; and there is no proof that the apostles employed help. Afterward, when baptized converts were numerous, and some were known to be qualified, they did have others assist; but now they stood so nearly alone that they scarcely employed help. The indications are against the supposition. It was nine o'clock before they began preaching; and it is not likely the preaching was over, and the inquiries made, and the counsels given, and the real penitents selected and examined, so that the baptisms could begin, till after noon. This left the time entirely too short to handle each person separately, as in immersion. Then, where did they find water? There was no river there. Jordan was twenty-eight miles distant; the brook Kedron was small, dry in dry weather, and turbulent in wet, and utterly unsuitable. But immersionists cry, lustily, "The pools! the pools!" Well, there were a few pools and water-pipes; but there

is no probability that these could be used for such a purpose. There were two pools in the vicinity—Siloam and Bethesda. The first was perhaps a mile distant; was flowing water, used for family purposes, and can hardly be supposed available, if it was of size and shape to adapt it to that end. I think no one believes the baptisms took place in it. Bethesda held water enough, but was not in condition, nor available. It was within the precincts of the Temple, under the control of the priests, and used for washing the animals offered in sacrifice. If obtainable, the water was not "pure water," after the service it was rendering in washing animals for the altar; and the priests, who controlled it, were not just then in a very amiable frame of mind toward this new religion, and were not likely to be so accommodating to the apostles as to permit them to immerse three thousand converts to this new faith, which they abhorred as the deadly foe to Judaism. The burden of proof, both in regard to the necessary time and facilities, is with those who affirm they were immersed. Plainly, the probabilities are all against the supposition.

The next case is that of the Ethiopian nobleman—the Eunuch. The record is in Acts viii, 26–40. The facts are few and simple. This case is a favorite with immersionists, being about the only example of apostolic practice which they press into positive service. We call it apostolic, though Philip was not an apostle, since it was in apostolic times. But what are the facts? We must study them carefully, and permit not one to escape notice.

The baptism took place on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, in a place that was "desert." That means rough, untillable, uninhabited. The road crosses quite a mountainous region, and there is no river on the road. Judea does not abound in "broad rivers and streams." Jordan is the only river of any consequence in Palestine; but that was far away, in the opposite direction from Jerusalem. If there had been a perennial stream in that section, it would have been noted as a river, and would have been named. There is not the slightest probability that there was a running stream there large enough to immerse a man in. And yet there was water; for

"they came unto a certain water!" That is all. Whether it was a fountain, spring-branch, well, brook, or cistern, does not appear. It evidently had no name, and most likely had been provided for some temporary purpose, as he who first saw it evinced surprise. That "desert" could not have been better supplied with water than the valley of Gerar, where wells had to be dug for the cattle. Kitto says: "The Jordan is the only river of any note in Palestine, and besides it there are only two or three perennial streams. The greater number of the streams which figure in the history and find a place in the maps are merely torrents or water-courses." Mr. Mitchell, in his Ancient Geography, after describing Jordan, Jabbok, Gadara, Heshbon, Kishon, Besor, and Kedron, says: "The largest only of the foregoing streams contains water all the year. The others are dry during the Summer." The fact that there was no stream of water in that "desert" of any note, or that has been found, in which immersion could take place, imposes the duty on the other side to prove immersion even possible in this case. If the word baptize

expressed that mode, we should have to infer the practicability of it; but, since it does not, we need the proof. The exclamation of the eunuch shows surprise at finding any water in the "desert." Riding along in the chariot, listening to Philip, he exclaims: "*Idou! hudor!*" ("Behold! water!") Nothing is said of the quantity. The particle *ti* means *some* or *any*, and would scarcely have been used of a living stream, when it is known that all such streams, and many mere wet-weather torrents, were named and called rivers. The history of the country, as well as its physical geography, proves that water was scarce—much too scarce to accommodate immersionists. But we must look again.

The great fact is that "they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him." The going "*down*" was not the immersion, for they "both went down." The going *into* the water was not the immersion, for they "both went into the water." They went down from the chariot; and they went into the water far enough to use it with the hand, as they probably used no vessel. Then, after they both went down

into the water, the baptism took place—"he baptized him." How, the word does not tell us; and the fact that they went down into the water does not tell us. We might admit that they entered the water, and yet find no immersion; but there is no proof that they entered it so much as with their feet. But, since the jingle of the words in our version indicates an entrance, we must look at the prepositions, and see if the entrance is really expressed.

I intend no extended discussion of *eis* and *ek*, but a brief illustration of their force and use. The preposition *eis* expresses motion toward, or approach unto, a given point or place; but the idea of an entrance, if there be an entrance, must be gathered from the general structure of the sentence, and not from the natural force of the preposition. To and unto are just as literal renderings as "into." The usual method of *expressing* an entrance into any place or thing by this preposition is by employing it as a prefix to the verb. When it is made a prefix to the verb, and then follows the verb as a preposition, an entrance is expressed; but, when this double

use does not occur, the entrance is not expressed. The Greek is full of illustrations of this rule; but I will only refer to John xx, 1–8. In this paragraph we have several examples: "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, *eis to mnemeion* [unto the sepulcher], and seeth the stone taken away *ek tou mnemeiou* [from the sepulcher]." Here we have *eis* and *ek*, "unto" and "from," when there was no entrance—no "into" nor "out of;" for Mary did not go into the sepulcher. "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came *eis to mnemeion* [to the sepulcher]. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first *eis to mnemeion* [to the sepulcher]. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; *yet went he not in* [*ou mentoi eiselthen*]. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and

believed." Now, here we have *eis* in every instance where the approach to the sepulcher is expressed, where there was no entrance, and where it is said of the disciple that outran Peter that "he went not in;" and then, in the two instances following, where the entrance took place and is expressed, the double use of *eis* occurs—that is, it occurs as the preposition, and also as the prefix to the verb, which is the proper way of expressing an entrance. The entrance of Peter is expressed thus: "*Kai eiselthen eis to mnemeion;*" and the entrance of that other disciple thus: "*Tote oun eiselthe kai ho allos mathetes.*" These examples sufficiently illustrate the use and force of these prepositions, out of which so much has been made; and all the criticism in the world can not change the conclusion reached in regard to the law governing the use of *eis*, while *ek* simply corresponds to it, expressing the opposite idea. Where *eis* is "to," *ek* is "from;" where *eis* is "into," *ek* is "out of," etc. Now, I wish not to be misunderstood in all this; for I know that *eis* is sometimes used as a preposition, and not as a prefix to the verb, where there is an

entrance, as when one goes to a city or to a country; but, in all such instances, the entrance is implied, or intimated in the nature of the case, or in something in the sentence besides the preposition. The force of the preposition does not express it. This is all that is necessary to show the failure of all efforts to prove so much as an entrance of the water, in the case before us, even to the extent of moistening the sandals; and all this applies to the other passages where these phrases, "going down into the water," and "coming up out of the water," are found, as in the baptism of the Savior. There is positively nothing in this language that indicates any thing about the mode of baptism; and this, in connection with the improbability of there being water in that "desert" of sufficient depth for immersion, leaves this celebrated case, which forms so large a part of the capital of immersionists, "high and dry" above the ragings of their noisy billows.

And it should not be forgotten that there was "sprinkling" in the text from which Philip was preaching to the eunuch. You remember that Philip found him reading a

passage which is in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and that his book was not divided into chapters and verses as ours is; and then you will observe that he was reading Isaiah's prophetic description of the Messiah, so that the paragraph he was reading, but a few lines above the one at which Philip arrested his attention, contained these words, "So shall he sprinkle many nations," etc. The evangelist could not expound the paragraph without encountering these words, and he must necessarily apply them in some way to the work of Christ. How could he explain them without referring to the religious use of water? And how could he apply them to Christ without pointing to the moral significance of the use of water? And, then, how could he make the sprinkling represent a moral cleansing without making it represent the same moral cleansing that baptism always represents. But if he made the "sprinkling" represent a moral cleansing, and the exact moral cleansing that baptism always represents, how could he fail to explain this sprinkling as a prophetic description of the baptism ordained by the Messiah? Deny

this, and the whole allusion is inexplicable; admit it, and the whole passage is plain, and the eunuch's allusion to water, as though Philip had just been speaking of water, is easily understood, and the conclusion becomes irresistible that Philip had explained the "sprinkling" as denoting baptism.

Our next example is the baptism of Saul of Tarsus. There are two points in the history of this case which can never be harmonized with the idea that he was immersed. The first is, that he was baptized *in the house*, in a private dwelling in Damascus; and the second is, that he was baptized in a standing posture. The first is the great fact, while the second beautifully coincides with the known circumstances of the case. The record is in Acts ix, 17–19: "And Ananias went his way, and *entered into the house;* and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose,

and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened." Saul, the persecutor, had received authority from the chief priests, to go to Damascus, and bind the disciples, and take them to Jerusalem for punishment. On his way, he was arrested by the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth, and convinced of the truth of the doctrine he was aiming to destroy. In agony of soul he cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He was told that he should learn that in Damascus. Then he was taken, blind and full of anxiety, to the city, to the house of Judas, on Straight Street. There he continued, in deepest penitence and prayer, three days and nights, without eating or drinking, and most certainly without rest. In the mean time Ananias was prepared by a vision from heaven for his holy mission, and was told where he would find Saul, and what he should say to him. The passage read relates the interview. Saul was a Jew, and needed not to be told what baptism was, or how it was performed. Ananias found him in the house, and no doubt found him prostrate with fasting and grief. Without delay,

he fulfilled his mission; for, approaching him, he said, Brother Saul, and laid his hands on him, and pronounced the words recorded. Then *immediately* the scales fell, and *forthwith* he received his sight, and *arose*, and was baptized. The narrative forbids the idea of delay, or of leaving the house. He had taken no refreshments since he came, and of course he was greatly weakened; but after he was baptized, he took food and was strengthened. It is as plain as if said in so many words, that he received refreshments before he left the house, after Ananias "entered into the house," and found him there. He was then in condition to go out to the synagogue, whither he went, and preached Christ unto the people. Now, here is the whole case: We find him "in the house;" we see how brief was the interview, and that the words "immediately" and "forthwith" are employed to indicate the rapidity with which the events of that interview occurred; and then the recognition of his weakness from fasting comes in to assure us, beyond doubt, that there was no leaving the house, nor wandering away in the search of a river or pool,

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and then coming back again, before the refreshments were taken. It is a plain case of baptism in a private family dwelling-house. We leave it for those who imagine him immersed, to imagine, contrary to the record, all the conditions of the immersion.

But he arose (*anastas*, stood up) and was baptized. In Acts i, 15, we have precisely the same expression in regard to Peter, where there can be no doubt that he stood on his feet: "And in those days Peter stood up [*anastas*] in the midst of the disciples," etc. This is the exact idea conveyed by *anastas*. Peter "stood up," and Saul "stood up and was baptized." This agrees with the command, as given by Ananias, Acts xxii, 16: "And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized." The original, *anastas baptisai*, is, literally, *stand up and be baptized*. This is to the point, and conclusive. Saul was baptized, in a private house, in the city, standing on his feet! Here we leave the case.

We will now accompany Peter from Joppa to Cesarea, and with him enter the house of Cornelius, the devout centurion, and witness the baptism of the first Gentile converts to

the Christian faith. We need not await to study the visions of the parties, by which one was induced to send, and the other to go when sent for; nor need we linger by the way to ponder the emotions and meditations of each, as the one gathered his friends and waited the strange, expected guest, and the other pursued his anxious journey, on a mission so novel, and as yet uncertain in its fullest meaning. We are already at the threshold of the centurion's house, and the interview begins. "As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshiped him. Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, *he went in*, and found many that were come together." Here we are, all in the house together. Peter asks why he had been sent for; Cornelius rehearses his vision, and the instruction of the angel; the last of Peter's misgivings depart, and he opens his ministry in faith. We pass over the sermon. It was worthy the occasion. It was of Jesus and the resurrection, and God's method of pardon, and closed with an appeal to the testimony of the prophets. "While

Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost *fell on* all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." This is all we know about this baptism. But it will be observed that the whole service was *in the house*. There is not the shadow of a hint that any part of it was outside, or that there was any delay. Indeed, the hints are all in the opposite direction; and, the more we study them, the more we see the folly of supposing that these Gentiles were taken out to a river or pool, and immersed. The baptism was suggested to Peter, and justified, by the fact that they had already been baptized by the *pouring out* of the Holy Ghost; for thus he explains it himself, in his rehearsal, when, after his return to Jerusalem, they of the circumcision con-

tended with him. In this defense, he said: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." If, when the Holy Ghost *fell on* the apostles at the beginning—that is, on the day of Pentecost—they were thereby baptized, as we know they were; so here, when the Holy Ghost fell on these Gentiles, as on the apostles, they also were baptized by this outpouring; and as they had the spiritual baptism, they ought to have its outward sign, which is baptism with water. Thus Peter reasoned, and thus the Church decided, when they held their peace and glorified God.

But we have another very suggestive hint in the apostle's way of calling for the water with which to administer the baptism. They were all in the house, and the water must be brought and handled, if the baptism took place in the house; or they must go out and find the water, and find it plentiful and accessible, if immersion was contemplated. The people and the water must be brought together. If

the apostle had contemplated the removal of the people, and asked for difficulties or prohibitions, he would have said, Can any man forbid the people? But since he did not do that, but alluded to a possible prohibition of the water, he evidently had the conveyance of the water and the handling of the water in view. This is plain and natural. It harmonizes well with the notion that the baptism was there in the house, where they were assembled; but it seems awkward, if a river was to be visited. A German divine has well said that the inquiry of Peter, when put into the language of modern etiquette, would run thus: "Will some one present be kind enough to furnish us a little water, that these may now be baptized therewith, seeing they have already been baptized with the Holy Ghost?" The appeal was to those of the circumcision, who came with him from Joppa, whose concurrence he evidently desired.

But, leaving this congregation still in the house, we pass over into Macedonia, and fall into company with Paul and Silas, who had been called there by a vision, as Peter had been to Cesarea. We find them, as the first-

fruits of their ministry, baptizing Lydia and her household, in whose house they find a home. Here Paul cast out a "spirit of divination" from a damsel who brought gain to her masters, and by this miracle excited the rage of those whose income had been so suddenly cut off. The result was, a tumult was raised, and Paul and Silas were arrested, and beaten with "many stripes," and cast into prison. Following them, we find that they were not looked upon as ordinary prisoners. The jailer was charged to keep them safely; and he intended to be faithful to his responsibility, knowing that his life would pay the forfeit if he proved remiss. Having received such a charge, he "thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks." After this precaution, he felt relieved of care, and went to sleep. But these prisoners did not sleep. "At midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And

the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Acts xvi, 25–34.)

Here are several notable things: 1. Paul and Silas were committed to prison under a strict charge that they be kept safely. 2. Under the pressure of this charge, the keeper "thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks." 3. They sang

and prayed at midnight, until the earthquake occurred. 4. The keeper slept where he could see the door of the inner prison. 5. When he saw the doors all open, he was alarmed; and, thinking the prisoners were gone, he was about to take his own life, in order to avoid a public execution. 6. Paul could see him in his apartments, from the inner prison, showing that the keeper lived in the same building; and, seeing him get his sword, the prisoner cried out to him to desist from his desperate purpose. 7. The keeper called for a light. While Paul could see him, he could not see Paul, for the inner prison was darker than the keeper's apartments. 8. He sprang in, from his own room, of course, into the inner prison, and fell down before them, and asked what he should do. 9. He brought them out—not out of the prison building, but out of the inner prison. This brought them into the common prison hall, located between the inner prison or dungeon, no doubt, and the apartments occupied by the keeper and his family. 10. Here the household gathered, as was most natural, under the excitement; and here the apostles

spoke the word of the Lord unto all that were in the house; and here water was brought, with which the lacerated backs of these men of God were washed; and here, without doubt, the baptism took place.

Is there any possibility of mistake at this point? I certainly think not; and yet immersionists struggle desperately to get all these parties out of the building, and away in search of a river, before the rite was performed. All that can be said on that subject, however, is in the words, "he brought them out." It is assumed, contrary to the probabilities in this case, that this took them out of the prison. I say, "contrary to the probabilities," for the reason that all the indications are that the jailer lived under the same roof with the prison, and the phrase, "he brought them out," can only apply to the "inner prison," into which he sprang. This is confirmed by the reflection that the jailer had not yet heard the word of the Lord, and was not yet in condition of mind to take the hazard of removing the prisoners from the prison, although his heart was touched, and he was prompted to show them

kindness. They spoke the word of the Lord to all in the house; but evidently these were now gathered in the prison; for the prisoners were not taken into the family residence till after their stripes were washed, and the household baptized. After this, they were taken into the house for refreshments. This is all natural, orderly, and in keeping with the positions and relations of the parties. But to imagine them all, the jailer, his whole household, and the prisoners, out of the prison building, in the dark, contrary to the law, and in jeopardy of the jailer's life, wandering through the streets of the city of Philippi, between midnight and daylight, in search of conveniences for immersion, is making too heavy a draft on the credulity of intelligent people. Nor is the supposition that the prison was provided with a pool convenient for the purpose less violent. There is really no hypothesis that will meet all the facts recorded, and explain all the allusions in the record, except the one just given. But this is utterly fatal to the idea that there was any immersion in this baptism. And the language and conduct of the apostles, the next day,

when the magistrates sent the under officers to the keeper of the prison, saying, "Let those men go," forbids the supposition that they had been out in the night. The keeper reported this to Paul, saying, "Now therefore depart, and go in peace." But Paul indignantly refused, and said: "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans. And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. And *they went out of the prison*, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed." Now, all this indignation is incompatible with the idea that they had been out of the prison "privily," to baptize the family, or for any purpose whatever; and the phrase, "they went out of the prison," when they left the keeper's house with his benediction, is proof positive that they were not out

of prison while they were in his house. Here, then, is baptism performed where immersion can not be supposed possible, without the most positive proof, the least particle of which does not exist. And here we take captive the immersion theory, and commit it, bound with chains of adamant, to the stocks and dungeon of an inner prison, while all its friends are unable to invoke an earthquake to move a bolt or jar a link!

These are all the baptisms of the New Testament which are supposed to indicate any thing as to the mode. Some of them must have been by sprinkling, to have any meaning. Not one is proved to have been by immersion, nor can there be a reasonable probability in that direction; while the immersion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost was almost certainly impossible. Of the others, one was in the "desert," far from any river, with the indications all against immersion; two were "in the house," in private dwellings; and the last, within the walls of the Philippian prison, in the darkness of the night!

Discourse VIII.

BURIED BY BAPTISM.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."—Rom. vi, 3–6.

IT is generally conceded, that, if immersion is taught in the Bible, it is here; and, if it can not be found here, but few persons will insist that it is the exclusive mode of baptism.

The immersionist interpretation of this passage is well known. It assumes that baptism is a burial of the physical man in literal water; and it finds a resemblance between this burial of the body in water and the burial of Christ

in the grave, and a resemblance between the emergence of the body from the water and the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It thus makes baptism a representation of the burial and resurrection of Christ. I have several serious objections to this interpretation, and will mention some of them, before taking up my own exposition.

First. I object to confounding the "burial" with the "baptism." The two things are distinct, and should not be confounded. The terms are not synonymous, nor are they interchangeable. It is absurd to say we are immersed by an immersion, or that we are buried by a burial; therefore the "baptism" is one thing and the "burial" is another thing. It is by the perpetration of this mistake that immersionists gather nearly all the comfort this Scripture affords them.

Second. I object to this interpretation that it violates all rule and authority by making some of the terms in this one process literal, and others figurative. It makes the "burial" literal, and the "death," the "planting," and the "crucifixion" figurative. These terms are all predicated of the same subject, in the same

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passage, and describe different parts of one process or experience, and are therefore all literal or all figurative.

Third. I object to this interpretation that it utterly mistakes the points of the comparison which the apostle makes, and substitutes for them other points of comparison which are not in the passage, and could not have been in the writer's mind. It assumes that the comparison is between baptism and the burial and resurrection of Christ. It sees in the act of putting the body under the water a representation of the burial of Christ; and, in the lifting of the body from the water, it sees the rising of Christ from the grave represented. This is the great point in the interpretation. If it is wrong here, it is wrong throughout; and it is wrong here, egregiously wrong. There is absolutely no such comparison in the passage. This will come out fully further along; but now I remark that the comparison is not at all between baptism, on the one hand, and the burial and resurrection of Christ, on the other hand. Baptism is not in the comparison at all. The comparison is wholly between the crucifixion, death, and

burial of Christ, on the one side, and the mystical crucifixion, death, and burial that takes place in us when we pass from the natural to the spiritual state, on the other side; and this comparison goes far enough to take in the resurrection of Christ, on one side, and the newness of life in which the Christian walks, on the other. This blunder is a serious one. It obscures the meaning of the passage, destroys its beauty and harmony, and leads honest people to imagine that they have been "buried with Christ," when they have not so much as caught a glimpse of the high significance of this Scripture. If the comparison is as is claimed, why do the advocates of this interpretation invariably leave out the "crucifixion," and restrict the analogy to the "burial?"

Fourth. I object to this interpretation that it confuses and confounds the sacraments by putting baptism where the Bible puts the Lord's-supper. In the Lord's-supper we show forth the Lord's death. This is the design of the Supper. But this interpretation makes baptism show forth or represent the death and burial of Christ. It places

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baptism where it does not belong, and gives it a meaning it was never intended to have; and, worse still, it destroys the design and significance of the rite as Christ ordained it. Baptism relates not to the death and burial of Christ, but to the office and work of the Holy Spirit. This is its fixed and invariable meaning, as we shall see more fully in the direct exposition, while the Lord's-supper relates only to Christ's death, and not to the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the ordinance of the Holy Spirit, and the Supper is the ordinance of Jesus Christ.

But these matters will all come up in the proper place, and we turn to a direct examination of the passage before us.

The apostle had just spoken of the reign of sin, on the one hand, and of the reign of grace through righteousness, on the other hand. He had affirmed broadly that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;" and then, anticipating an objection to this doctrine of the superabounding of grace, to the effect that it might encourage some to "continue in sin," and thus tend to licentiousness instead of holiness, he answers this

objection, and shows that his doctrine leads to holiness, and not to sin. The answer which he presents to this objection is, that all who come under the reigning power of grace "*die unto sin.*" This thought of a death unto sin is that which he enforces and elaborates throughout this chapter. Hence the language with which the chapter begins: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death," etc.

There is a sense in which all that Christ suffered in redemption is made over to believers; and there is a sense in which all believers are united to Christ, and so identified with him in the contemplation of the Deity that Christ's suffering is attributed to them; so that it may be said that when Christ was crucified, they were crucified with him; when he died, they died with him; when he was buried, they were buried with him; and

when he arose, they arose with him; but to predicate a crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of believers on this ground alone would require a bold figure indeed. There is an actual experience to be gained, a real transformation into the image of Christ, by an inward fellowship in his sufferings. When the redemption is made over by faith, so that the believer shares it, and passes from the carnal into the spiritual life, then he comes into fellowship with Christ's sufferings, is made conformable to his death, and experiences the power of his resurrection. This is a veritable experience, which has its incipiency, its growth, and its full development; and this experience is described in the passage under consideration. When we apprehend Christ, and put him on, or enter into covenant with him, in baptism, we solemnly engage to die unto sin, and undertake to verify this whole process, which becomes a life-time work. The study of the terms and figures here employed to give expression to this profoundest experience of the soul, is our present task.

I begin by recalling your attention to the

distinction between the "baptism" and the "burial." That which is done by baptism is not baptism. The burial is effected by baptism; therefore, the burial is not baptism. Baptism is the agent or instrument, and the burial is the result. This thought, that the burial is not an act nor an instrument, but a result or effect, is essential. Let it be clearly apprehended and borne in mind; for here is the starting-point of much of the blundering of the immersionists in their interpretation. Baptism is an action, a momentary action; but the result, the burial, is permanent. It is not temporary or momentary, but something which must continue as long as we remain dead unto sin and alive unto God.

Then, the question arises, Is this a literal or a figurative burial? Or perhaps this point would be more clearly brought out if I ask, Is the burial the literal covering of the body in the water, or is it a spiritual result wrought in the spiritual nature? The immersionist, of course, sees nothing in the passage but a literal burial of the body, by covering or submerging it in water. But he who affirms this ought also to interpret the other terms in the

passage in just as literal a sense. The "crucifixion," the "planting," and the "death," are all as literal and as material as the "burial." Indeed, these terms all belong to the same class, and are descriptive of parts of the same process or experience, and to separate them is to do violence to all rules of interpretation, and common sense as well. But who can believe that the "crucifixion" is a literal crucifixion of the literal man? that the "planting" is a literal planting of the literal man? and that the "death" is the literal death of the literal man? He who can believe all this must possess a stock of credulity that rarely falls to the lot of reasoning men; and yet it is not a particle more absurd than it is to hold that the "burial" is literal, while the crucifixion and death are figurative.

The true answer to the question concerning the nature of the burial will be found by ascertaining the subject of the burial. What is it that is buried? Every thing in the passage must hinge on the answer to this question. The immersionist says it is the body, the literal man. If this turns out to be true, he

gains a point; but it is a point which brings trouble on every side. But let us look a little. We never bury a man till he is dead. Hence, a burial always implies a death—a previous death. If we hear that a man has been buried, we need not be told that he had previously died. So in this Scripture. Here is a burial, and it implies a previous death; but the previous death is expressed, as well as implied, and it is a death unto sin. And that which dies is the subject of the burial. There can be no question here. The identical thing or person that dies is the thing or person that is buried. Then, if we can find out the subject of the death, we shall have found the subject of the burial. If it is the body that dies, the literal man, it is the body that is buried; but if it is not the body that dies, it is not the body that is buried. If it is the soul that dies, the soul is buried. Or if it is neither the body nor the soul that dies, literally, but something that pertains to either or both, then that thing which dies, whatever it is, must be the subject of the burial. Thus far, all is plain. But the question is, What is it that dies? It is not the

body; for Paul was yet alive in the body, and was writing to men in the body. It was not the soul; for the soul was undergoing an experience that brought life, and not death. What, then, could it be? The question is vital, and we must move cautiously in quest of the answer.

The apostle Paul, in this Epistle, deals largely in personifications. Indeed, he personifies almost every thing he mentions. The law, sin, death, life, grace, righteousness—all are personified; all these, in the vivid, animated style of the apostle, pass before us as living personalities, clothed with all the powers and passions of active intelligences. In this way the carnal nature, the moral depravity of our being, is personified, and denominated the "old man," "the body of sin." This "old man" is the aggregate or assemblage of the sinful lusts and affections of the unrenewed nature; and the great problem in Christianity, and in human experience, is, as to the way of subduing or triumphing over this "old man" within us. This is the point in the apostle's argument, and he here teaches that the "old man"

must be destroyed, or put to death by "crucifixion."

Now to the question, What is it that dies? The answer is found in the manner of the death. How is it brought about? The apostle answers this right here in the text; and you observe I am not going abroad to gather into the text a forced meaning. Right here we read that the death which precedes the burial, the death of the subject of the burial, is brought about just as Christ's death was brought about—by crucifixion. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Here it is. It is not the body that is "crucified," nor the soul, literally, but the "old man." The "old man" is crucified, dead, and buried—crucified with Christ, dead with Christ, and buried with Christ. And here the "old man" is left. He is "put off," not to be put on again. He is buried, not to be unburied again. He is not in the resurrection. That which is buried must remain buried. This is the death unto sin, with its cause, process, and result.

But what does all this mean? Can it be possible that this "crucifixion" of the "old man" must come into the account? A moment's reflection will satisfy any one—unless it be some one whose creed is in danger—that this whole experience is one process, given in the inverted order; the apostle beginning with the result, and tracing it backward to the starting-point. But the question may arise as to whether we have taken the right view of the "old man." May it not be that the "old man" means the body, the physical nature? If so, the body must be "crucified" before it becomes the subject of burial; and if the burial means an immersion in water, none but a dead body is fit for that ceremony! We learn elsewhere what the apostle meant by the "old man." We read the following on this point, in Colossians iii, 8–10: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Here is the "old man," and he has been "put off," but the body is not put off; neither is the "old man" put on again, but the "new man" is put on in his place. To the same effect we read, in Ephesians iv, 22–24: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The antithesis is between the "old man" and the "new man," not between the body and the soul. The "old man," like a garment worn out or polluted, is "put off;" and the "new man," like a new garment, fresh and clean, is "put on." Thus the "old man," following the figure in the text, is "crucified," and thereby put to death; and, being dead, must be "buried" out of sight. This consummates the process, so far as the "old man" is concerned. The "old man" does not rise, but the ensuing "newness of life" is found in the "new man," not in that which was crucified. The "old man" is "the flesh," "the body of sin," "the body of the sins of

the flesh;" and, as certainly as there is meaning in language, this "old man" is the subject of the crucifixion, death, and burial mentioned in this passage of Scripture. Paul says (Galatians v, 24): "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;" that is, they have crucified the "old man," the embodiment of the affections and lusts. What can be plainer than this, or more in harmony with the whole tenor of apostolic teaching? But, if I am right in this, it is evident that these terms are all to be taken in the figurative sense, and the idea of a physical burial of the physical man in a physical element is as foreign to the passage as is the thought of burying a man in the moon.

And here I must recur to the mistake so often made in regard to the comparison, or analogy, found in this text. Immersionists, starting with the blunder of confounding the baptism and the burial, imagine that the comparison is between the act of baptism and the burial and resurrection of Christ. This, allow me to repeat, is all wrong—wrong in inception, and in every point of application. There

is no resemblance between baptism, in any mode, and a crucifixion; and, therefore, there is no starting-point, nor foundation, for this prevalent notion, which has misled so many. The comparison is not with baptism at all. The only comparison in the passage is between the crucifixion, death, and burial of Christ, on the one hand, and the mystical or spiritual crucifixion, death, and burial of the "old man," "the body of sin," on the other hand. In this comparison there is force, because here there are points of resemblance, which, in the bold, figurative style of the apostle, may be traced so as to justify the analogy, and vindicate the rhetoric as well as the argument of the inspired man of God.

Now we must return to the word "buried." We have found the subject of the burial, and reached safe footing for the assumption of its figurative character; but we must study the figure a little more fully. Although the burial is figurative, the real idea of a burial must be carried out, in order to justify the figure. We therefore need a definition of the word, as much as if the burial were literal. What is a burial? There are many

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forms or modes of burial. Our impressions are mostly derived from modern customs. We very naturally associate with the word buried the kindred thought of a grave, with a coffin deposited, and earth shoveled upon it till the grave is filled. But our Savior was not buried in this way. His grave was a room hewn in the rock—a room with floor, walls, and ceiling, so to speak—and large enough to admit several persons; for a number of the disciples walked into it after his resurrection. His body was taken from the cross and placed in this room, and the door was closed by rolling a large stone against it. Such was the burial of Christ; and the idea of representing or imitating such a burial by a sudden dip of the person in the water and out again, is far-fetched, to say the least of it. But still, regardless of mode, the word has a radical meaning, which we want to ascertain, if possible. Although, under the Roman law, a legal burial might be effected by casting a handful of earth upon the dead body, it is not to be supposed that the apostle had this loose provision of law in mind. We must rather assume that his idea of a

burial accorded with the meaning of the word, which is to hide, to put away out of sight, to cover up. Let this, then, be the signification of the word to-day. It means a covering up out of sight. There is no burial where nothing is covered up.

But, if a burial means that the thing buried is covered up, the thing covered must be covered with something. There must be a covering—what is that? We have found the subject of the burial, and now we must find the covering. The "old man" is dead, and the "old man" is "buried;" and that which is buried is covered up out of our sight, and put away from our fellowship, as effectually as are our kindred when we bury them. But what can cover the "old man," "the body of sin?" Water will not do in this case, for all material elements are valueless in such an emergency. Now that he is "crucified," and is therefore in the "likeness" of Christ's death, how is his burial "with Christ" effected? Now, mark all the steps; for we are at a crucial point, one that you must not lose. Well, that which is buried is covered up; and it is always covered

with that into which it is buried. If a man is literally buried into the earth, he is covered with earth; if he is buried into the sand, the sand is the covering; and if he is buried into the water, he is covered with the water. Now, how is it with the "old man"—*into* what is he buried? Not into the earth, nor into the sand, nor into the water; therefore the covering in this burial is not earth, nor sand, nor water. But this is a burial by baptism *into death;* therefore the covering is death. But what death is this? There was a death which preceded the burial, a death by crucifixion; but here is another death, which now becomes the covering, because the burial is into it. What death can this be? It is not the death of the body; for even those who insist on burying the body, refuse to bury it "into death." If they should make the death as literal as they do the burial, they would drown every one buried; but they will not do that. They prefer the inconsistency we have pointed out, and the destruction of the apostle's rhetoric, to such a literal construction of death. Nor is the death which becomes the covering spirit-

ual death, or the death in sin; for the process in question is one which breaks the power of this death, and releases the soul from its grasp. Neither can it be the "death unto sin;" for that, in the order of right conception of the process, is past. It was accomplished by the crucifixion. What, then, is the death into which the old man is buried, and with which he is covered? In order to obtain the answer, we need not leave the language before us. Right here in the text we have it: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized *into his death?* Therefore we are buried *with him*," etc. Here it is, so plain that we can not mistake the point. "Into *his death;*" that is, into the death of Jesus Christ. We are baptized into his death, and we are buried *by baptism;* so that we are buried into the death into which the baptism inducts us; and this death we know is the only covering for sin, the only covering for the old man, which is the "body of sin." The word "therefore," in the text, connects the burial with the death of Christ, and makes this the only grammatical construction. Here, then, is the process,

so far as it relates to the "old man:" The "old man" is crucified as Christ was crucified; the "old man" dies as Christ died; and the "old man" is buried as Christ was buried. And as the "old man" is buried into the death of Christ, he is covered up by that death. Like as the lid of the ark of the covenant, overshadowed by the cherubim of glory, was the mercy-seat, which covered the tables of the law, so the sacrificial death of Christ, the true mercy-seat, covers the sins of all that are "crucified" with him. "Blessed is the man whose sin is covered."

It has already been said that this burial is not a momentary affair, but a permanent result. I wish to emphasize this thought. The burial is not a ceremony, but a profound experience. It brings us into a new relation to Christ, a new state of spiritual activity, and makes us new creatures. Old things pass away, and all things become new. The language is not, "We were once for a moment buried with Christ," but, "*We are buried.*" If we are in Christ to-day, we are as much buried with him now as we were at the hour of our entrance into the "newness of

life." The aorist tense, here employed by the apostle, alludes to past time, to the period of crucifixion, death, and burial, but it also expresses a continued effect. When we say of a dead man that he is buried, we allude to a past occurrence, to the time when the burial took place; but we also include the thought that the man is yet in the grave. So this mystical burial was present with Paul and those to whom he wrote. And the effect metaphorically expressed by the burial must continue. To unbury the "old man" would be to give him back his life and power, and amount to an apostasy from Christ. He must remain beneath the covering of the atoning blood, so long as we remain dead unto sin, and our life continues hid with Christ in God.

The metaphor of "planting" comes into this text by the act of the translators, rather than by the apostle. Paul was given to the use of mixed metaphors; but we could not be true to ourselves, and the text, if we did not remark that the word *sumphutoi*, rendered "planted," simply conveys the idea of uniting or growing together, as in the case of graft-

ing, and can only mean that by crucifixion with Christ, as explained, we join Christ in his death, and so unite with him as to share its benefits. The whole idea is that by this process we reach the "likeness of Christ's death." There is no possible allusion to the mode of baptism in any metaphor this word may contain.

The analogy between the resurrection of Christ and the "newness of life" does not imply that the burial ceases. The "old man" is "put off," not to be "put on" again. The "new man" takes his place, and comes into the comparison, as soon as the resurrection of Christ is mentioned, "that like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The "newness of life" is the proper antithesis to the death and burial of the "old man;" just as the putting on of the "new man" is the antithesis of the putting off of the "old man," in the other passages cited; and the resurrection of Christ is not symbolized in the passage, but is itself made the symbol or pattern, as well as the source, of the newness of life to the believer. How different is all

this from the immersionist rendering, which virtually says "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so must our bodies be raised out of the water by the arm of the preacher!"

All this exposition, as far as developed, is corroborated by the other passage which speaks of burial in connection with baptism. I refer to Colossians ii, 10–12: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Here is the same experience, implying the same process, and reaching the same result. Here we find the same "old man," though not named, to be "put off"—"the body of the sins of the flesh." But here the metaphor of circumcision is brought in, and that of crucifixion omitted. The rite of circumcision becomes the illustration of the putting off of the body of the sins of the

flesh. "In whom ye are circumcised," is just as positive, and as literal, as the burial. But there is no comparison drawn between the manner of circumcising and the result attained; neither is there any comparison between the manner of baptizing and the result reached, which is the burial. We can not argue from the burial to the manner of baptizing, any more than we can argue from the "putting off the sins of the flesh" to the manner of the circumcision. The circumcision is not literal, for it is a "circumcision made without hands;" that is, a spiritual circumcision, or the result which circumcision, when taken in its spiritual import, always indicates. So the "burial" is not literal, but spiritual; that is, it is a spiritual result, which answers to the religious meaning and design of baptism, and not to its mode or outward form. The "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," in this passage, is the same as the "crucifixion of the old man," and the destruction of the "body of sin," in the text in Romans. In one place the body of sin is put to death and buried, in the other it is "put off;" in one

place the burial is associated with "crucifixion," in the other with "circumcision." In neither place is the mode of baptism brought into the comparison, and in neither place does the "old man" rise; but in both places the resurrection of Christ is made the pattern and pledge of newness of life: "Wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God"—not by the muscular power of the preacher's arm! The truth is that, here in Colossians, the two rites, circumcision and baptism, are so blended in the illustration of this wonderful experience as to demonstrate the identity of their import, and to bring out the spiritual signification of each. The circumcision without hands is just as physical as is the burial in or by baptism. The preposition expresses agency.

The tenacity with which men hold their traditional notions of a text which has been used to bolster cherished prejudices is most wonderful. Hence, we must look again at this language. Here is the pronoun 'we.' The apostle says, "We are buried;" and does not this refer to the persons baptized,

simply as men? Well, yes; the whole experience is wrought within the person. The "old man" is "*our* old man;" and when "*our* old man is crucified," *we* are crucified; and when he dies, *we* die to sin; and when he is buried into Christ's death, *we* are buried. Yes; and when the "newness of life" is raised up in us, *we* are risen with Christ. Just so, when the "old man is put off," we put him off; and when the new man is "put on," we put him on; and we are the new creation. Our identity remains; but all this does not make the "old man" and the "new man" the same thing; nor do they occupy the same place in the metaphorical representations of the apostle. Paul uses the pronoun elsewhere quite as emphatically, when no one will imagine for a moment that he had any physical action on his person in view. Read Galatians ii, 20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: for the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Here is the same thought. "I am crucified"—not literally, nor is the whole

person the subject of the crucifixion; but, as he more definitely states in Romans, the "old man" is crucified, dead, and buried with Christ, and the new man, or newness of life, the life of faith in the Son of God, ensues. Turn as you will, you can not escape this style of thought. This personification of the carnal nature, and the metaphorical crucifixion, death, and burial of the "old man," is the key to much that is otherwise obscure in these Epistles, and, when clearly apprehended, it unlocks many mysteries, and sheds a flood of light upon some knotty questions in theology, in regard to the deepest experiences of the divine life. The experience it unfolds is vital. Unless the "old man" is crucified with Christ, dead and buried with him, so that "we" are brought or grafted into his death, we can have no fellowship with Christ, and must fail to reach the likeness of his resurrection. We can not, therefore, afford to fritter away a truth so important and precious as this; and it does seem to me that to reduce this crucifixion, death, and burial with Christ "into his death," to a sudden dip of the body in water and out again, is

little short of handling the Word of God deceitfully.

But here is another question—one which you have, perhaps, anticipated: What has baptism to do with this burial?. Or perhaps the real question is, Why is this effect, this consummation of the death unto sin, ascribed to baptism, as the agent of its accomplishment? We must weigh this point well; for you see that it reaches the heart of the subject.

This will also suggest the question as to what baptism is intended, whether the outward rite or that of the Holy Spirit; but I shall cheerfully accept the statement that the word is to be taken in its most obvious sense—that it means the ordinance established in the Church, to be administered by the use of water, wherever the Gospel is preached. Some insist that the baptism of the Spirit is meant, and that water is not in the passage. I make no point of this kind. The truth is never advanced by the assumption of extreme ground in its defense, not warranted by the facts, or the force of the words employed. The word baptize occurs a few times in the Scriptures in connection

with the work of the Spirit, so that there is a baptism of the Spirit, which is the real baptism, of which that with water is but the symbol, or outward expression. But it is probable that the word baptism passes over from the outward rite to the inward work, as a metaphor, because of the relation between the ordinance and that which it represents. This relation is not accidental, nor is it temporary or variable. It is a relation chosen by divine wisdom, and established by divine ordination, and is therefore definite, fixed, and unalterable. When this thought is properly developed, it will show at once why the work of the Spirit is called a baptism, and why the whole work of salvation, which is wrought only by the Holy Spirit, is ascribed to baptism.

In order to the development of this foundation principle, you must indulge a seeming digression. The work of salvation is divided, so to speak, into two departments. The first relates to the law of God, and our relation to the law, as sinners; and, for the purpose of distinguishing it, we call this the legal aspect of the scheme. The other department relates

to ourselves, to our interior state or condition, as depraved persons; and this we may designate the moral aspect of salvation. As sinners, we are under the law, under its curse, and liable to all its maledictions; and, within ourselves, we are spiritually blind, depraved, dead. To effect our deliverance from this twofold helplessness, is the purpose of the plan of salvation revealed in the Gospel. In the nature of the case, the work of saving us must have a twofold bearing; it must affect our relation to the law, and it must work a transformation in our spiritual natures. Accordingly, to meet this twofold demand, there are two distinct personal agents revealed, each engaged in his own appropriate department; namely, the Son of God, and the Spirit of God. All that pertains to redemption, properly speaking, or that concerns our relation to the divine law, is done by the Son of God himself, in his personal agency; and all that relates to our inward condition, or that affects our interior state or spiritual life, is done by the personal agency of the Holy Spirit. Hence, every particular act or element of the work of salvation that is

expressed in the Scriptures by a forensic term, is ascribed to Christ, and belongs to the legal aspect of the scheme; and every other part—that is, all that relates to the inward work, as enlightening, quickening, regenerating, renewing, etc.—is ascribed to the Spirit, and belongs to the moral aspect of the scheme. This distinction is not arbitrary, nor is this distribution of the work and classification of terms an accidental or fictitious arrangement. The recognition of it is necessary to a proper understanding of the ordinances, and to right conceptions of many theological points connected with Christian experience. It is a distinction and distribution founded in the nature of things, and established by the wisdom and eternal purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

These two aspects of the plan of salvation, and the twofold work, were prefigured under the former dispensation. Pointing to our salvation from sin, in its twofold aspects, were two classes of typical services; namely, bloody sacrifices and watery ablutions. These related respectively to the redeeming blood

of Christ and to the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, and lasted till Christ died and the Holy Spirit was given. Then all the typical bloody sacrifices were fulfilled in Christ, and all the typical washings with water were fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This done, and the typical services were no longer in place. Their meaning was lost in their fulfillment; but, *in their stead*, two services were instituted, adapted to the new dispensation — the one a commemorative rite, pointing to the blood of Christ, already shed; and the other a symbolic ordinance, pointing to the purifying influence of the Spirit of God. The Lord's-supper recalls to the memory of the Church precisely that which was prefigured by the bloody sacrifices of the law; and Christian baptism symbolizes that which the old watery ablutions adumbrated. There is, therefore, a fixed, definite, unchangeable relation between the Lord's-supper and the official work of the Redeemer. In this service, Christ's death is distinctively shown forth. It relates to Christ and to his work alone. The bread and wine are the symbols of redemption. The Lord's-supper

is the sacrament of the Son of God, and relates to the legal aspect of salvation; and there is an equally direct and permanent relation between the ordinance of baptism and the Holy Spirit. The water of baptism is the ordained emblem of the Holy Ghost working salvation within the soul. This is its invariable meaning and design. Apart from this it is without authority, and without sense or significance. Baptism is therefore the sacrament of the Holy Ghost. The work of the Spirit is the foundation of the ordinance; and baptism derives all its meaning, efficacy, and value from its relation to the Spirit, which it represents. It is on this account that the work of the Spirit is sometimes ascribed to baptism, and that the word baptism is applied to the Spirit, and used to denote the work of the Spirit. This is done by an easy figure of speech, in which cause and effect, and symbol and the thing symbolized, are rhetorically interchanged—a figure which is familiar to all students of the Bible, and misleads no one.

This arrangement of the ordinances can not be reversed. The Lord's supper does not

relate to the Holy Spirit, is not an emblem of the Spirit, and can not be made to represent the work of the Spirit. If applied to the work of the Spirit, its meaning is lost. It has its origin, its foundation, and its meaning in the official work of Jesus Christ in our redemption. So, on the other hand, baptism never relates to the Son, but always to the Spirit of God. It is not the symbol or emblem of the work of the Son, and loses its meaning, and is perverted, the moment it is employed in emblematical representation of what he did or suffered. Fidelity to truth demands this demolition of the foundation of the immersionists' use of the text before us; for just here is their fearful mistake. Laboring under the erroneous impression that baptism might symbolize the death and burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, immersionists have habitually forced this ordinance into a service it was never intended to perform. Losing sight of his death by crucifixion, and of his burial by being laid in a rocky sepulcher—a room with door and walls—they have imagined a resemblance between the burial of Christ and the immersion of the body in

water, and between the resurrection of Christ and the lifting of the body out of the water; and upon this forced analogy, without foundation in fact or authority in Scripture, they have erected their exclusive superstructure, which can only stand by robbing this apostolical description of the mystical crucifixion, death, and burial, which destroys the reigning power of the "old man," of its real meaning, and reducing the profoundest experience of the regenerated soul to the mere form of an ordinance, and perverting that ordinance by thrusting it into the place of the Lord's-supper! Misguided by this false light, multitudes have supposed that they have been "buried with Christ," and met the requirements of this Scripture, when they have looked no further than to the physical covering of their bodies in water, without crucifixion or death! The consequences of such radical error are too numerous and grave to be passed over mincingly.

We must retain the ordinances in their appropriate places, and give them distinctively their appointed significations, if we would understand them or use them to edi-

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fication. The Lord's-supper represents the death of Christ, and baptism does not. Baptism represents the Holy Spirit in purifying the heart, and the Lord's-supper does not. Baptism is the "sign of regeneration," the symbol of the inward spiritual washing that takes away our defilements and makes us one with the Lord. Taken out of this relation, and despoiled of this design, it is meaningless and void; and when divorced from its legitimate work, and forced into an unnatural service, what wonder that it becomes a mystery, a snare, a mere form and tinsel in the Church, according to the caprice of men!

Now we have reached the place for answering the question as to what baptism has to do with the burial. Understanding the relation between baptism and the Holy Spirit, the explanation of the relation of baptism to the "burial" of the "old man" into the death of Christ is natural and easy. The work of crucifying the "old man" is done by the Holy Spirit. No other power could nail him to the cross. The death unto sin, the result of the crucifixion, is by the same agency. No one will dispute this. What

then? Why, the burial is but the consummation of the same process. But, if so, this entire work of conquering the "old man" and destroying the "body of sin" is really done by the Holy Spirit. Here the ground is firm. But why is all this ascribed to baptism? The reason is in the sense in which it is ascribed, which is now apparent. It is all explained by the relation between baptism and the Spirit. The effect, which is wrought by the Spirit, is ascribed to baptism by an easy figure of speech, in which the symbol is named for the thing symbolized. This is the whole of it. No other explanation has ever been given that obviates absurdities, and at the same time harmonizes the language and all the facts.

This position may be illustrated by the language of Christ with reference to the other ordinance. When the Savior instituted the Supper, he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." It was not his body; but then it was the emblem of his body, and was to stand for his body, in that sense, till the end of time. He added the words: "Which is

given for you." It was not yet given, for he had not yet died; but, in his unchangeable purpose, the consecration was made. "Likewise after supper he took the cup, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Drink ye all of this." He did not mean that they should drink the cup, but that which was in the cup. Then he added: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." It was not his blood literally, but only the fruit of the vine; nor was his blood yet shed, for he had not yet been crucified; but then the relation between the bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ, then established, to abide through all the future, explains and justifies the language. It was a figure of speech in which the container was put for the contained, the emblem for that which it represented. Nothing is more common in language, or more beautiful in rhetoric; and this is precisely the way the apostle Paul ascribes to baptism that which was really wrought by the Holy Spirit. In one place it is said, "This is my body," when it was only the emblem of the body; and in the other place

it is said, "By baptism," when it was by that which baptism always implies and represents. The figure of speech is the same; and that the whole process of induction into Christ is by the Spirit, is too plain to need proof. The apostle elsewhere says: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

And now, brethren, I have given my answer to the question concerning the relation of "baptism" to the "burial," and flatter myself that the view presented meets all the conditions of the case, and unfolds the meaning and design of the two ordinances, with their respective foundations, and manifests the folly of Romanism in multiplying the sacraments beyond the number ordained by the Lord Jesus, as no antagonistic interpretation has ever done. And you will permit me to express the belief that this exposition, however imperfectly presented, rescues these somewhat famous Scriptures from most frightful abuse, and reveals in them a beauty and force and depth of meaning which can never be seen so long as the mode of baptismal

administration is regarded as the central thought, or allowed to have any thing to do with this highly figurative language. In fact, the mode of baptism is not mentioned or alluded to, directly or indirectly, in this whole argument, and has no pertinency to the subject, while the design and spiritual meaning of baptism come in naturally, and explain the allusion. I bring nothing fanciful or far-fetched, nor do I seek to capture your concurrence by any brilliancy of rhetoric or display of elaborate criticism; but I lay before you what seems to me the most natural explanation, and the plainest that will bring out the beauty and force of the passage.

I know that commentators, and men eminent for piety and learning, have accepted the statement that these Scriptures allude to immersion; but I know, also, that most of those have been absorbed in other great issues, which they treated critically, while they looked upon the mode of baptism as an incidental matter, of no vital significance, and passed over it by simply following in the footsteps of trusted authors. I therefore respectfully decline permitting the authority of

great names to weigh aught in opposition to the well ascertained sense of the inspired record. I do not believe it in the power of human learning, ingenuity, or skill to find the mode of baptism here, without distorting the sense, and doing violence to the apostle's most striking conception of the death unto sin. I leave the subject with you, and pray that the light of divine truth may shine into our hearts until the mists of error and the film of prejudice shall be removed from our mental and spiritual vision.

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Discourse IX.

SPIRIT BAPTISM.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."—Matt. iii, 11.

THE abruptness of the record introducing the ministry of John, by simply announcing that he came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and that Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to him, and were baptized, has been mentioned in preceding discourses. The more we think upon it, the more we are impressed that the rite of baptism was not new to the Jewish people. They had in some way become familiar with it, and readily apprehended the import of John's preaching, and the significance of the rite which he administered.

Another point is evident. These Jews were believers in the divine authority of the

law of Moses, and were professing and cherishing the strictest loyalty to that law, even while submitting to the baptism of John. They must therefore have regarded the baptism of John as being entirley consistent with the law, if not as legitimately deducible from it. It is not supposable that there either was, or was thought to be, any departure from the law, in accepting John as a prophet, and his baptism as an institution of strictly Jewish origin and import. We must therefore look into the habits and thoughts of the Jews, to ascertain the light in which they looked upon this baptism, and how they so readily accepted it as compatible with their allegiance to Moses, and the ceremonies which they received from him, and from their fathers.

We do not find the word baptism in the law. It does not appear to have come into use until after the captivity in Babylon, as the term by which to designate the ceremonial washings enjoined by the law. But there is no trouble in tracing the use of this word, in this connection, in the later Jewish history. The use of the word in the Apocrypha, and

in the New Testament, with reference to the Jewish washings, is sufficient for our purpose. In a former discourse, we found it used in the Apocrypha with reference to the ceremony of "washing from a dead body." "He that washeth himself from a dead body, and toucheth it again, what availeth his washing?" (Ecclesiasticus xxxiv, 25) Here are two words rendered wash in the same verse, and with reference to the same ceremony. The last one is the usual generic term for washings of all kinds, without respect to mode, and the first one is *baptizo*—a word which agrees with *louo*, so far as mode is concerned, but conveyed to the Jewish mind the additional idea of a religious act, or ceremonial cleansing; and this was the real nature of the washing to which it relates in this place. Such a use of the word proves that at least a portion of the legal washings among the Jews were known as baptisms. And this fact is confirmed by the passage in Mark vii, 3, 4, where it is said that the "Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they *wash* their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come

from the market, except they *baptize*, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the *baptism* of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables." No one doubts that these were religious washings, and had respect to the ceremonial law concerning contact with unclean persons. The Jews thought themselves liable to contact with the unclean in market-places; and as a precautionary measure, to avoid uncleanness in the eye of the law, they adopted the practice of purifying or washing themselves ceremonially, after all occasions of exposure; and these "washings" were called baptisms. Of course they were not immersions. All the circumstances forbid that supposition, and the law they were following did not demand immersion. But they were baptisms, nevertheless.

I would also briefly recall the use of the word baptisms in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the application is to the legal washings of the Jews. "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and *divers baptisms* [*diaphoris baptismois*], and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."

(Hebrews ix, 10.) Here the "baptisms" are "divers," numerous, and of different kinds; and they are not the superfluous baptisms voluntarily practiced by the Jews, or enjoined by tradition, but they are such as the law "imposed" upon them. The allusion is to the whole list of watery ablutions required by the law of Moses. Of this there can be no mistake. And in writing this Epistle to the Hebrews, the author of it was careful to use terms that Jews would understand, and to give such interpretations of the law as would stand the test of Jewish criticism. Otherwise, his whole purpose would have been thwarted. It is therefore preposterous to entertain a doubt that the Jews had come to know all their ceremonial uses of water under the law by the general name of baptisms. This is corroborated by their practice of baptizing proselytes, both before and after the Christian era. We can not believe that they would adopt this practice from Christians; and to suppose they first learned it from John does not account for their promptness in accepting a new rite at the hand of John. All the facts in Jewish history, before

and since the coming of Christ, conspire with wonderful naturalness and irresistible force to prove that the Jews were acquainted with baptism before John began to preach it in the wilderness. But if so, if they knew it at all, they knew it as the religious use of water, as prescribed by the law; and then this reference to the "divers baptisms" is perfectly natural, proper, and easily understood. Then, admitting that the Jews were thus acquainted with the rite, we can explain the abruptness of the record of the opening of John's ministry, and also the readiness of the popular acceptance of the rite of baptism. But all this takes us back to the law, to find out the manner of using the water in those ceremonial washings called baptisms. The exclusive immersionist can not afford to admit that any one of these washings was performed otherwise than by immersion; and yet he is unable to find a single one in all the law where immersion was required. On the contrary, he finds that in every instance, where the manner of using the water is prescribed at all, it is by sprinkling; and he finds, furthermore, that in every case, where sprinkling is not required, the

use of the water is expressed by a generic word which does not express mode at all. Alas for immersion, if the baptisms of the New Testament correspond with the "divers baptisms" of the law!

The manner of the passing away of the legal services of the former dispensation has been hinted at; but here we ought to look directly at it. The sacrifices of the law were not arbitrarily set aside, but their typical import was first met by the sacrifice of the Son of God himself. Then the typical sacrifices became obsolete, and were allowed to cease. The feast of the passover was not rejected and arbitrarily abolished. The Savior honored it with his presence, and celebrated it with his disciples, and then quietly transformed it into the commemorative rite which was appointed to be the memorial of his death till his coming again. He might have told the disciples that the paschal lamb had lost its significance, and that the feast should cease forever; and he might have devised something entirely new as the memorial of his death; but he chose to merge the feast of the law into the eucharistic feast, to be

perpetuated to the end of time. And the watery ablutions of the law might have been all set aside by the word of the Master. He could have shown that the moral cleansing which they represented was effected by the Holy Spirit, and that a new dispensation of the Spirit was at hand, so that all typical washings would be out of place; but he chose to do nothing of the kind. He took those washings, which were now known as baptisms, just as he found them, and honored them by obedience, only refusing to obey the traditions which had been added by the "elders," and then merged them all into "one baptism," which he ordained as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, and made it the sign of regeneration—the emblematic washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

The importance of observing this order of the two Christian ordinances was set forth in the last discourse. We saw that one is the sacrament of the Son of God, and relates to the redemption of men from the curse of the law, and derives its meaning and value from its relation to Christ, and not from the manner

of its administration. And we saw that the other has its foundation, its meaning and significance, in the work of the Holy Spirit; and that it relates to the moral aspect of the Gospel scheme of saving men, and is emphatically the ordinance of the Holy Ghost. We can not too strongly insist upon this arrangement of the sacraments. It is not arbitrary, nor is it guess-work. It is founded in the essential nature of the ordinances, and is fundamental in the Gospel economy. It is a distinction that obtained under the law, and continues under the Gospel, and it is but simple justice to recognize its true bearing in this general discussion; for without it neither the foundation of the ordinances can be comprehended, nor the relation of the dispensations traced.

We come back, then, to the primary assumption, that John's baptism was in keeping with Jewish rites; that it had a religious import which the Jews could understand; that it corresponded to the washings of the law, in that it was a ceremonial cleansing, signifying a purification of the soul and of the life; and that the water which was used in the

ceremony was used in the way of ordinary religious washings or baptisms enjoined in the law. This baptism Jesus Christ himself received, though not in its ordinary acceptance as a baptism of repentance. It was capable of adaptation to the exceptional case of our Lord, and even in this adaptation it still kept within the "righteousness of the law," for it fulfilled a "righteousness" which must have had respect to the law. It was a Jewish washing, and stood as a connecting link between the legal washings of the Jews, the "divers baptisms," and the "one baptism" of the Christian economy. But John's baptism, and the "divers baptisms," and all baptisms practiced by the Jews, pointed to a spiritual cleansing. Without this they were all meaningless. Christ therefore adopted a Jewish rite, and made it a Gospel rite. He did this of choice, and did it without any essential change in its nature, or any change whatever in its mode. He lifted it to a higher dignity, and gave emphasis to its meaning, but otherwise left it unchanged. Hence the absence of all explanation or restriction as to its use or meaning. It passed

over to its new relation, taking up in the transition but little that was not already in it. As it had ever pointed to a moral cleansing of the soul by the Holy Spirit, so it ever must. It has no other meaning. All the watery ablutions of the law pointed to the work of the Spirit of God in the soul; and most of them are known to have been by sprinkling. And all the *prophetic* representations of the moral purifications under the Messiah's reign, are descriptions of the sprinkling of water. All the metaphorical declarations of the work of the Holy Spirit, under the Old Testament and the New, point to the descent, the falling, the outpouring, of the Spirit; and whenever, in type, or prophecy, or promise, the work of the Holy Spirit is represented by water, it is by the sprinkling of water, or by its pouring out as in rain. And never once is immersion, in type, or prophecy, or promise, in the Old Testament or the New, made a symbol or emblem of the work of the Spirit. This is a most significant fact, which can not be accidental. It has a meaning which harmonizes delightfully with the view of baptism which we advocate, and

which arrays itself in the most positive antagonism to the immersion hypothesis.

John's baptism, like all the baptisms of the Jews, foreshadowed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is his meaning when he says: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Look at it: "I baptize," "he shall baptize;" "I baptize *with water*," "he shall baptize *with the Holy Ghost.*" Can there be any difference in the mode? There surely can not be, so far as the language is concerned. Then which is the real baptism? Evidently, that which the "mightier" shall administer. And which baptism shall determine the mode? Evidently, the real baptism; and the emblematic, the outward, the baptism with water, must take its form from that.

And this brings us to the vital question, What is the mode of that baptism which Christ administers when he baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire? We are obliged to be cautious when we speak of the *mode*

of the Spirit's work. In reality, we can not comprehend it; but then God condescends to represent to us the manner of his operations by metaphors and symbols, so that in our conceptions of his work we are permitted to give it form and method. Perhaps this is necessary to distinctness; and there may be a broader basis for the doctrine of correspondences in the relations of the natural and spiritual, in God's great universe, than we now suspect; but, however real or however unreal in fact the analogy between the water and the Spirit may be in regard to mode, the represented analogy is to us real, and the terms employed in the representation are to have the same force and meaning as if the mode of the Spirit were as literally expressed and as readily comprehended as is the case with the water. In other words, when the inspired writer says the Spirit is "poured," the word "pour" has the same meaning as when it is said that water is poured. We are not to go beyond the *represented analogy* to ascertain the basis of the comparison, or to discover the actual motion of the Spirit, before we conceive of the action of the Spirit

as expressed by the word. Such mental effort is neither required nor possible. It is enough that the writer assumes a sufficient basis in the nature of things, and applies to the Spirit the word which conveys a definite idea of mode when applied to water. That same idea of mode, whether absolutely or philosophically correct or not, is to be accepted as the idea which the writer intended us to receive; and it is the only idea that is either possible or lawful for us to receive. Hence we are bound to accept the statement that the Spirit was poured, as conveying to us as distinct an idea of mode as if it were said the water was poured. The word pour has precisely the same force in either instance. It may be that all allusion to the mode of the Spirit is figurative; that there is no positive basis for any comparison between the pouring of water and the pouring of the Spirit; that the idea of mode attached to the Spirit by the word pour comes entirely from the water, and that the water is made the emblem of the Spirit arbitrarily, and independent of all actual resemblance; still, even in that case, the word pour relates to mode,

and expresses mode, and proves beyond all question the mode of the use of the water, as positively as if the resemblance between the water and the Spirit were real, and actually demonstrable.

That the word pour is applied to the Spirit, is not a question. The Scriptures abound with proofs and illustrations. But does the word pour express the action of the Spirit in the baptism of the Spirit? If it does, it expresses the mode of the Spirit's baptism, and therefore what should be the mode of the emblematic baptism, as positively as if it were applied directly to the action of the water in the external rite. We come, then, to the turning-point in the argument, and find the testimony overwhelmingly in favor of the pouring. The statement is brief. It is that *the same specific action of the Spirit is called a baptism and a pouring out.* The word *baptize* is in the promise, and the word *pour* is in the fulfillment; and these answer the one to the other, so as to affirm the baptism to be by pouring. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." This is the promise as made by John the

Baptist; but we have it in the Savior's own words (Acts i, 5): "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Thus the promise. The fulfillment was on the day of Pentecost. The disciples were all assembled, waiting the promise, and praying for its fulfillment. Suddenly the power came, and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." When the excitement ensued, and they were charged with drunkenness, Peter repelled the charge, and explained by claiming that the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled, thus: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." (Acts ii, 16–18.) The fact is not to be disputed that the pouring of the Spirit, as here described, fulfilled

the promise of baptism by the Spirit. I do not say that the word *pour*, as applied to the Spirit, means all that *baptize* means in the promise. That is not the point. *Baptize* is generic, and *pour* is specific; but the action of the Spirit, whose mode is expressed by *pour*, is the identical action contemplated in the promise of a baptism. It is a baptism by pouring, as certainly as there is meaning in words.

Such a fact as this, so utterly confounding to the teaching of the exclusive immersionists, could not be suffered to stand without an effort to break its force. It is claimed that the apostles were so overwhelmed with the Spirit as to be immersed in it. They were doubtless overwhelmed with its power and influence, for a time; but they were filled with it — it took possession of their souls. But this does not indicate the mode. That is expressed by the word "pour," and by nothing else. Impressed with this view of the matter, and yet determined to find immersion here because baptism is certainly here, some have invented an exposition that secures an immersion by pouring. They tell

us that the Spirit was poured out so copiously that it filled all the room where the apostles were sitting, and that, consequently, they were immersed in the Spirit, as we are immersed in the atmosphere that surrounds us and fills the rooms we occupy. This is crude, and materialistic in conception, and, unfortunately for the theory, it is without favor in the record. There is nothing said about the room being filled by the Spirit. The statement is that "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, *and it filled* all the house where they were sitting." This "sound" preceded the coming of the Spirit, and heralded the fulfillment of the promise; but it was not the Spirit. If the apostles were immersed in that which filled the house, they were immersed in the "sound;" and I do not know but we might admit this, as there is nothing said about a baptism of "sound!" and possibly we could afford to leave to the immersionist both the noise and the wind. But, really, the effort to make an immersion out of this baptism of the Spirit must prove a hopeless task.

There are other allusions to the gift of the Spirit, that indicate the mode of baptism. When Peter opened the door of the kingdom to Gentiles in Cesarea, in the house of Cornelius, it is said: "While he yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts x, 44, 45.) The two words, "fell" and "poured," agree well together, and each expresses the mode of the baptism, if this was a baptism; and that it was, is seen in Peter's account of it, when he returned to Jerusalem and rehearsed the matter in the presence of the apostles and brethren. His words are: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell on them, as on us at the beginning*. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." (Acts xi, 15, 16.) The reference to the gift of the Spirit, when it "fell on us at the beginning," not only fixes the mode of the baptism on

the day of Pentecost, but settles the point that this gift of the Spirit to the Gentiles was also a baptism. These persons were baptized with the Holy Ghost when it fell upon them. This is confirmed beyond doubt by the subsequent language: "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." If this does not mean that they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, when it was poured out, and fell upon them, then indeed it must be true that words are employed to conceal ideas, rather than to convey them. I know that it is said that these words which express mode, such as "fell," "poured," and other expressions, as "shed forth," "shed on us," and the like, can only be applied to the Spirit figuratively, or by way of metaphor; but suppose we agree to this, what then? We have already spoken on this point; but we turn to it again. If these words contain a metaphor, or are applied to the Spirit only figuratively, the same is true of the word baptize; and it is true, also, that the figure employed or

implied has a basis somewhere, and that can only be in the emblem that represents the Spirit's action; that is, the water as used in baptism. If this be true, and we shall not dispute it, then the argument for the mode is quite as strong as when real mode is assigned to the work of the Spirit, if not even stronger. In this case, it is said to be baptism, because the water symbol is baptism; and it is said to be "poured," because the water that represents it is "poured;" and it is said to "fall" on the people, because the water of baptism "falls" on the people. Thus the mode of the baptism is determined, and put beyond the reach of argument, in any view that can be taken.

But we must not forget that there was a double baptism on the day of Pentecost. In the promise of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, "fire" was mentioned, and we find the "fire" also in the fulfillment. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, *and with fire.*" How were they baptized with "fire?" This promise is so coupled with the promise of the Spirit that we look for the fulfillment together. And so we find it. The record is

that the fire followed the sound that filled the house. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." If this did not fill the promise to baptize with fire, that promise was never filled; but if it did, here is a baptism without immersion. The apostles were baptized with fire when it sat upon them, in the semblance of cloven or double tongues of flame. As water is the standing emblem or symbol of the Spirit in its gracious work in the soul, so the visible tongues of fire, on that memorable occasion, appeared as the symbol of the Spirit in its miracle-working power; and as this extraordinary gift of miracles is not continued, and was not to be permanent, so the fire symbol was not continued. But a general discussion of this matter is not required. I leave the plain, unimpeachable, and unanswerable fact before you, that the apostles were baptized "with fire," when their bodies were not enveloped, but when it sat upon them.

Good men, when cramped, will sometimes do strange things. A few immersionists, finding the stubborn fact of this fire-baptism

confronting them, have assumed that the Baptist addressed two classes, the good and the bad, and meant the baptism of the Spirit for one class, and the baptism of fire for the other—making it mean the unquenchable fire of hell! To mention so preposterous a thing is to refute it. The promise in full is made to the same persons: "*He* shall baptize *you* with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;" and the same persons experienced the fulfillment at Pentecost. I only mention this to show the lengths to which prejudice will push men.

We have reached a point where we must look for little things. Occasionally we encounter the remark: "If all you say is true, you have two modes of baptism, at the least. You have shown that the baptisms under the law were by 'sprinkling,' and that these represented the work of the Spirit; and now you find the same work of the Spirit represented by 'pouring.' How is this?" Well, all this is true; the Scriptures contain it all. But then there is nothing shockingly paradoxical in it. All the expressions applied to the Spirit may be used of the water in baptism. It was "poured," it "fell," it was

"shed forth," it was "shed on us." All this may be said of rain. It was "poured out," it "fell," it was "shed forth," "shed on us," etc.; and the descent of the Spirit is often compared to the descent of rain, in its coming and in its effects; and yet there is no impropriety in saying we are sprinkled by the falling rain. The result is, there is no substantial difference between pouring and sprinkling. They are not different—certainly not conflicting—modes of baptism, and both are Scriptural. The water, applied to the person more or less copiously, all else being right, will constitute Scriptural baptism.

We now come back to the fact that immersion is not commanded. Certainly it is not, unless the word baptize contains the idea so distinctly and exclusively that it means immerse and nothing else. But we have seen that it does not. It is a generic term, and can not be restricted to mere mode; and, if generic, it does not express mode at all, any more than does "wet," "wash," "stain," "dye," or any number of such words. Bible use sustains this position, as we have seen; and classic usage sustains it; and so do all

the authorities, when rightly understood and applied. There is no specific term in the English language that is an exact equivalent of the Greek word, not one that will express and exhaust its meaning. If the Savior had wanted a specific term to express the mode, as he would have done if he had intended to command the apostles to immerse the people, he could easily have found one. If he had used *kataduo* or *katapontizo*, there would have been no doubt about his meaning; but he passed by specific words of this class, that express the idea of going down under the water specifically, and adopted the generic word, which the Jews used to describe, in a general way, all their religious washings, without regard to mode, while, in point of fact, the most of them were by sprinkling. This is an overwhelming argument against all exclusiveness in this matter.

Immersion is not necessary to meet the spiritual import of baptism. Baptism represents the moral cleansing of the soul by the agency of the Holy Spirit. This moral cleansing is all represented by the use of water, but always by pouring or sprinkling.

Let us read a few examples: "I will *pour water* upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will *pour my Spirit* upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." (Isaiah xliv, 3.) "For it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and *rain* righteousness upon you." (Hosea x, 12.) "He shall come down *like rain* upon the mown grass." (Psalm lxxii, 6.) "Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be *clean:* from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, *will I cleanse you.* A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." (Ezekiel xxxvi, 25–27.) "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: so shall he *sprinkle* many nations," etc. (Isaiah lii, 14, 15.) Some of these relate to the moral cleansing, and some to the comforting, refreshing, and renewing power of the Holy Spirit; but, in every

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instance the work of the Spirit is represented by water, and always without the slightest allusion to immersion. The effect of the Spirit's work is sometimes called "washing," but not so as to include or imply immersion. "*Wash* me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Psalm li, 2–7.) "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings." (Isaiah i, 16.) In the New Testament, this moral cleansing is called "the *washing* of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he *shed on us* abundantly through Jesus Christ." (Titus iii, 5, 6.) When the cleansing is by blood, it is by the sprinkling of blood; when it is by the ashes of the burnt-offering, it is by the sprinkling of the ashes; and when it is by water, it is by the pouring or sprinkling of water. Now, if the moral cleansing, which is figuratively set forth in so many ways, and always by pouring or sprinkling, is represented in the ordinance of baptism, is it not sufficient that the water be used, in this emblematic washing, as it always was used in

other emblematic representations of precisely the same thing? So it seems to me, and so it must appear still more strikingly, when we find similar words, as "pour," "fall," "shed," applied directly to the action of the Spirit, which effects the cleansing, and which is itself a baptism.

Immersion is not universally practicable. The Gospel is intended for "all the world"—for "every creature." It is therefore adapted to every clime and every condition in life, and all its appointments should be applicable to all. But there are large sections of country, inhabited by multitudes of human beings, where immersion is impracticable for a large portion of the year. In those countries where brandy and mercury freeze in Winter; where the people crowd together in huts, and stop the openings with ice; where they procure water for necessary uses by melting snow and ice; where nearly all streams and lakes freeze to the bottom, immersion would be exceedingly difficult and burdensome, if at all practicable. In case of the sick, every one knows that immersion is often out of the question. Instances of persons in feeble

health getting their death by exposure in being immersed, are not infrequent. Many were impressed, during the late war, with the awkwardness of immersionists in the chaplaincy. They were called to minister to the sick and dying, to the maimed and wounded, where immersion was impossible. This awkwardness was increased to inexpressible embarrassment with some, who taught that immersion was a condition of forgiveness, and the act of induction into Christ. But any one visiting the hospitals of a great army can see the impossibility of insisting on such a rite. These difficulties are real. I know they are treated lightly, and laughed at as trifling; but this does not remove them. The argument is, that either God has enjoined a duty to be perpetually and universally binding, which, for a large portion of the year, is impracticable, burdensome, or dangerous for millions of the race, or else he has not enjoined immersion as the exclusive mode of baptism. The Gospel comes to all, in every age, in every condition, in the polar snows or the burning sands, in arid wastes or mountain fastnesses, in palace or hospital, in

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the air of freedom or within prison walls; and it comes with all its comforts and helps, and in perfect adaptation to all. But, tested by this rule, exclusive immersion is another system.

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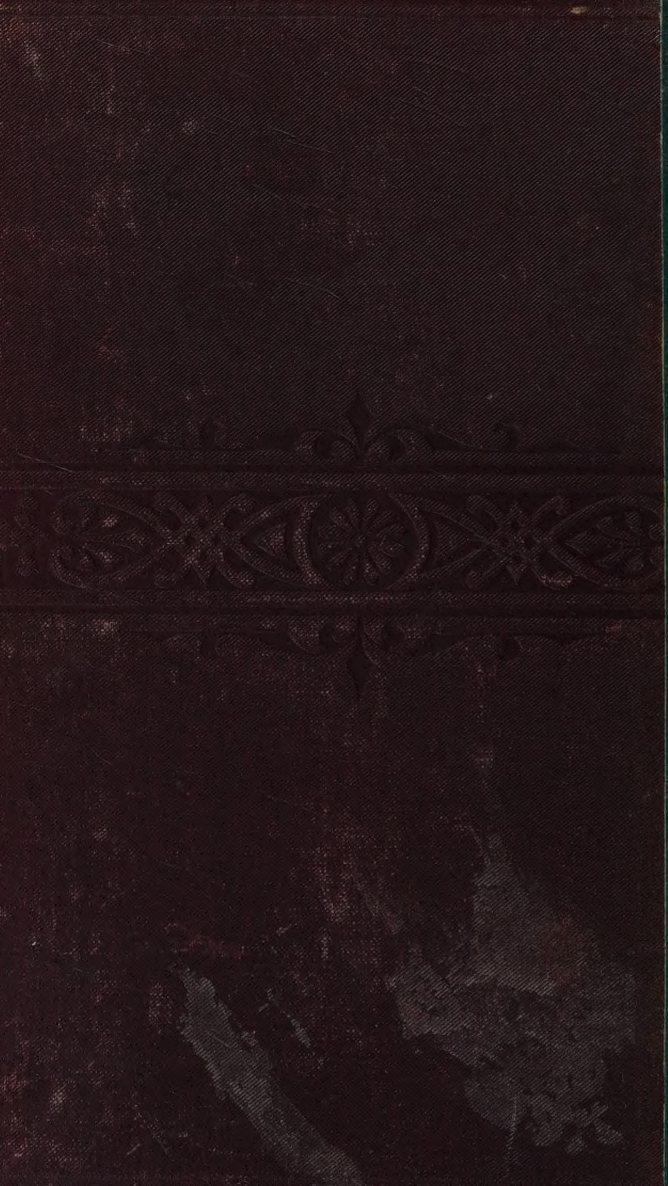
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